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OF THE
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S. T. COLERIDGE.

ESSAYS

AND

MARGINALIA.

BY 44547a

HARTLEY COLERIDGE.

EDITED BY HIS BROTHER.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

NNA K 4

LONDON:
EDWARD MOXON, DOVER STREET.
1851.

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LONDON:
BRADBURY AND EVANS, PRINTERS, WHITEFRIARS.

PREFACE.

Of the volumes now presented to the public, the First contains a collection of Miscellaneous Essays, principally critical, reprinted, with some additions, from various periodical works: the Second consists of Notes, transcribed for the most part from the margins of the Author's books, and forming several distinct series, more or less regular, on Poetry and on Art, on Biblical criticism and on Church politics. Nothing can be more slight and accidental than these pieces, so far as regards the form under which they were produced: they appear, however, to have been well-studied, and carefully composed. At any rate, they are evidently the genuine and unforced products of

the Author's mind, who has put forth in each case exactly what he had to say; neither more nor less.

Though written at dates ranging over a period of nearly thirty years (the order of which, speaking generally, is observed in the present publication), commencing in early manhood, and continued through middle life, little inconsistency of opinion, or even of style, is discernible in these pieces. A progress may, however, be traced in simplicity of expression, without loss of liveliness, in justness of thought, and in depth of feeling. In this, and in other respects, they run closely parallel to the author's Poems, recently published,* and in both cases are highly subjective and even personal, differing in this from his father's literary remains in the same kind, which speak with the abstraction of a proverb or an oracle, as if the words were self-originated. A double

* Poems of Hartley Coleridge, with a Memoir of his Life, by his Brother. In two volumes. 1851.

image is thus presented of the author himself, each distinguished by a certain passionate reflectiveness, but with a prevalence in the one of emotion, in the other of speculation and thought. To complete the parallelism, and as a necessary feature of the likeness, the editor has determined, after some hesitation, to add the religious articles at the close of the volumes, which might else seem out of place in a work of so miscellaneous, and in parts, apparently, of so light a character—apparently, for there is little or no real levity. A vein of deep seriousness runs beneath, and a growing earnestness in the pursuit and enunciation of truth is discernible throughout.

A grave exception may, however, be taken by some persons, not merely to the straightforward, and occasionally playful, terms in which the Author's religious opinions are delivered, but in some cases, it may be, to the opinions themselves, which are of a sort on which men have hitherto come to no agreement, and on which it is, perhaps,

well that they can agree to differ,—though it were much to be wished that they could dissent with more charity, and dispute with more candour. For these the editor, not having suppressed them, has to a certain extent made himself responsible, though he is not prepared in every case to adopt them as his own, without correction or explanation. He has judged—

First, that the earnest testimony of a thoughtful man of letters, confessedly of strong natural genius, and of high mental cultivation, to the objective truths of a divine revelation, and of the sacred records in which it is conveyed,—to the miraculous character of the one, and to the absolute authority of the other (setting aside minor points), might not be without effect at the present time in quarters to which appeals, of a more conventional character, might not find their way, or where they might be found less persuasive: the more so from the casual manner of its appearance, and the undress in which it is presented.

Secondly, as regards matters of detail, he deems that good may be anticipated from the discussion itself, regarded as tentative merely, when conducted, as in the present case, with manifest sincerity, and an apparent freedom from external bias. New light may be thrown on the subject, and help afforded to a further investigation of the truth, though it be not yet fully attained.

Lastly, in respect of those occasional topics, to which the circumstances of the present time have lent so stirring an interest, though the decisions of the writer may not be accepted, as a whole, by any particular party, yet none, he believes, can object to the witness borne to the National Church as a high, spiritual, and unworldly polity,—no good man be displeased by the jealousy with which every interference with its proper character, every impediment to its proper operations, are pointed out and deprecated.

A second selection from the Author's papers,

in the nature of a Table Talk, in which the colloquy is carried on with himself, his books, and his distant friends, may hereafter be produced, if the reception of the present volumes justify the undertaking. A new edition of "The Northern Worthies," with additional notes and corrections, will be taken in hand immediately, and may be expected in a few months.

DERWENT COLERIDGE.

St. Mark's College, Chelsea.
April 17th, 1851.

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ESSAYS.

ESSAYS.

ON PARTIES IN POETRY.

If the Muse would not be scandalised to find herself in company with the demon of politics, our most considerable writers, with a few exceptions, might be classed as Constitutionalists, *Legitimates*, and Revolutionists.

The great excellence to which our political constitution approximates, is the fair and balanced representation of all the great interests of society; and, as resulting from thence, the due subordination of every part of the body politic to the whole. An analogous excellence is discoverable in the writings of our great dramatists, and dramatic poets, (under which title Chaucer may be fairly included,) up to the age of Milton. These, therefore, we call the upholders of our poetical Constitution. They were the elect of nature, and uttered, as it were, the common voice of mankind. They preserve the balance between the various elements of humanity;

between those simple energies and primary impressions, which it has been the fashion of late to call exclusively natural, and the complex regards that arise from artificial society. The grave and the gay, the rustic and the refined, the town and the country, are adequately represented in their writings. They never introduce characters, as corrupt ministers are said to have sometimes appointed members of parliament, merely in order to utter their own opinions, their likes and dislikes, through many mouths; nor do they dispose incidents so as to maintain their peculiar theories. There is no self, no idiosyncrasy in their writings. They speak, in short, for the whole estate of human nature, not for that particular plot of it which themselves inherit. This praise belongs to Shakspeare pre-eminently, yet in large measure it is due to his predecessors, contemporaries, and immediate successors.

Spenser and Milton, admirable poets as they were, were not so properly Constitutional as their great compeers. They rather resemble the framers of ideal commonwealths, than citizens of any actually existing state. They do not represent nature, if by nature we mean *reality*, but an abstraction, an apotheosis of nature. Yet they were by no means alike. Milton is the most ideal, Spenser the most visionary of poets. Neither of them was content with the world as he found it; but Spenser presents you with a magic picture to exclude it from your sight, Milton produces a pattern to mend it by. After labouring in vain to stamp perfection on an

earthly republic, he embodied it in a new world of gods and godlike men. His boldest imaginations have the solemnity, the conscious grandeur of moral truths; his ideals seem more substantial, more real, than any actual reality. He rouses the mind to more than common wakefulness, while Spenser enchants it into an Elysian dream.

If, however, these mighty spirits were not Constitutionalists, they were quite as good. If they do not represent nature as it is, they show us a glorified likeness of it. That which was earthly is become celestial, but still it retains its due proportions.

But there were some, and those too of no common genius, who fell into the fatal error of representing particular parts: a race who might justly be called metaphysical poets, set the example by giving an undue preponderance to the speculative intellect. Ben Jonson is not wholly free from this fault; Lord Brooke, the most obscure of all poets, was a far more glaring offender; and some of the imitators of Spenser are almost equally guilty. Those whom Dr. Johnson calls metaphysical poets, substituting conceits and witticisms for the profound thoughts of the first commencers of this corruption, prepared the way for the epigrammatic versifiers of the French school, by teaching their readers to expect perpetual surprises. Thus, the first serious inroad on our poetical Constitution was effected by the head obtaining more than its share in the representation. A contrary abuse has prevailed in later times.

The Civil Wars upset Church and State, and

poetry shared the fall. Milton survived the deluge, and after tossing a weary while on the waves of controversy, was safe landed, like Deucalion, on the summit of Parnassus. But, alas! he helped not to people the world anew. A foreign swarm was called in to replenish it. French principle, in government and in criticism, overpowered or corrupted the old British spirit; and thence arose the court or Legitimate school, the days of heroic verse, and mad or spurious loyalty. True it is, there were many struggles for freedom; and in poetry, as in politics, there were Whigs, and Republicans, and lawless innovators. There was Andrew Marvel, who deserves a place in the House of Poets, and did honour to a seat in the House of Commons. There was Cowley, a loyalist of the best order, who would, perhaps, have been a better poet, and a better patriot, had he been less fond of his wit and his ease. It may be said that his style is laboured, but laborious trifling is a not unfrequent resource of indolence. Then there was Waller, a true Legitimate in politics, and the father of the sect in verse; and Dryden, like his own Ahithophel, veering to all parties, and ever inclining, against his better judgment, to the strongest; Otway and Lee, who caught the last gleams of declining tragedy; and a tribe of rhymers and playwrights, with and without titles, who had the merit of combining the contemptuous chilliness of high life with the grossness of St. Giles's.

The Revolution came, and established liberty for all but the poor and the Muses. The former were

still constrained to be proud of the privileges of their betters, and the latter were content to walk gracefully in their chains.

Far be it from us to undervalue that polished and elegant style, which finds its best direction in portraying the polish and elegance, the foibles and vanity, of artificial life; and expresses, with almost equal happiness, the gentle titillation of flattery, the frosty keenness of well-bred sarcasm, or the smooth regularity of prudential moral. Nor is it incapable of higher elevations. The lofty and impassioned satire of Dryden, uniting the vehemence of anger with the self-control of conscious determination, presents the finest example of that sort of voluntary emotion, which, like a well-managed charger, is most under command at highest speed. But the passion of Dryden is that of an advocate who pleads for a stranger, and his indignation is like that of a judge haranguing a culprit. If he is affected, it is with the power of his own eloquence, not by real concern for his cause. After all, he is rather an energetic than a feeling writer. He has very little heart, and a great deal of nerve. Any one who will take the pains to compare his "All for Love" with Shakspeare's "Antony and Cleopatra," may readily comprehend the distinction. Shakspeare's characters are impassioned; Dryden's are all in a passion. In the former, love, grief, pride, remorse, are acts of the immortal being; in the latter, they are the mere effects of physical temperament, diseases to be cured by low diet and phlebotomy.

Yet no author has equalled Dryden in his own way; Absalom and Ahithophel is, in our language at least, quite unrivalled. It is a somewhat singular circumstance, that almost all our good political poems have been written by Tories; Butler, Dryden, Swift, and the writers of the Anti-Jacobin. Churchill forms a solitary exception, unless we may add Defoe, who displays in his "True-born Englishman" considerable powers of satire. Our Whigs have been a most unpoetical generation, dull when they abuse, and very dulness when they praise. The truth is, Whiggery, as distinguished from Republicanism, is a species of moderation; a good thing, doubtless, for plain matter-of-fact citizens, but by no means congenial to poetry. The stern Republicans of Charles's time considered verse as an abomination; and even Milton abstained from supporting the cause in metre. Modern Republicanism is of Yankee origin—a descent that promises little but what is anti-poetical. The Muse is degraded when she flatters a king: to flatter a mob is a baseness she never can submit to.

We must confess, that we like the style of the Legitimate poets, as we respect the courts of legitimate monarchs, but we object to the too great influence of either. We take a warm interest in the detail of ladies' and gentlemen's dresses, which so innocently occupy the columns of the "Morning Post" after a Drawing-Room, though we have not yet been presented ourselves; and are often at a loss for the meaning and pronunciation of the French and Italian phrases which still keep their place in the

vocabulary of the toilet, notwithstanding the royal preference for articles of British manufacture. But we are always pleased with our own ignorance, when, as on this occasion, it affords an opportunity for our fair acquaintance to display their superior learning. Rebuke from the lips of a female is sometimes quite as agreeable as praise. We delight to imagine the case of the courtiers, the bustle without confusion, the finely contrasted self-importance of old peers and new ones; of the commoner whose name is in Doomsday-book, and the city knight, whose title appeared yesterday, where his bankruptcy may appear to-morrow. We can recal to mind the old, hearty, English gentility of George III., or picture to ourselves the graceful and gracious urbanity of our present Sovereign. But though neither Quakers nor democrats could easily persuade us to consent to the entire abolition of all this, we do not wish every day to be a court day, and still less all the world to be a court. Our moral existence would be as much endangered by such an arrangement, as our physical life in an atmosphere of entire oxygen. We reverence our monarch, but there is much worth preserving in our Constitution that is neither courtly nor monarchical. So also we esteem the poets who represented the courtly in human nature, with all its refinement, its fickleness, its brilliant vivacity, its attachment to the formal and conventional; with as much of good as is necessary to ease and decorum, and all the evil that can make or conform to a fashion. They are useful in their own days to

check affectation, and curious in after times because they record it: most curious, because they prove within how small a circle the endless race of folly is confined; how soon caprice exhausts her tricks, and how often she repeats them.

But, prone as man is to become a creature of the mode, there is much in his composition that opposes it. He has affections, and those affections have objects that are very little influenced by fashion. The chance is, therefore, that a class of writers who represent only so much of man as is at the mercy of circumstance, will not be found the best representatives of his total being. Still they are not more imperfect than others who have taken a like partial view, or received an equally limited commission.

To speak plainly, we consider the poets of the French school, Dryden, Pope, &c., to have been excellent in their way; and no one need wish them individually to have been other than they were. But those principles of criticism, which tended to prohibit all poetry that was not like theirs, were as detestable in taste as the political tenets of certain persons, who, because monarchy is good while it co-exists with freedom, wish to establish it upon the ruins of all social privileges, however hallowed by antiquity, or imperiously demanded for the welfare of mankind.

There is a whimsical, but, we think, striking analogy between the political dogmas of those worthy personages who boast themselves loyal to the shame of loyalty, and the critical rescripts which were held

of authority in Queen Anne's time. An extreme of caution characterises both, with a mighty reverence for etiquette; great pretensions to decorum; frequent appeals to precedent, yet chiefly to the precedents of late, and not the best periods; an instinctive horror of whatever is new or bold; and a not less intense, though less open, aversion to whatever is derived from simpler and more energetic stages of society. Both, perhaps, have the merit of repressing presumption, but then they are equally fatal to originality. They may now and then prevent a goose from affecting the swan, but for this service shall they be allowed to clip the wings of the eagle? No; let their dealings be with demagogues and poetasters; the true poet, and genuine patriot, are out of their jurisdiction.

Legitimacy, neither in poetry nor in government, ever attained its height in England. It is an exotic, and, Heaven be praised, does not thrive well with us. Yet it helped to murder our tragedy; and if it produced two great poets, and some excellent comic dramatists, it has to answer for much that it caused, and perhaps for more that it forbade, to be written. Wit, the characteristic of the true Legitimates, is not common; the affectation of it is pestilently so. Dryden and Pope had innumerable imitators, yet how few of them are read or remembered? Volume after volume of Dr. Anderson, and Mr. Chambers, are full of the trash of pretenders of this school, who keep their places, and elbow out their betters.

Our literature, for a while, was threatened with a

Chinese despotism. *Things as they are*, the watch-word of our *legitimate* politicians, was carried to a dreadful extent indeed. True, there were some recusants; but "their puny thwartings, and mock opposition," served only to show the strength of the prevailing mode. Among the innovators, was that pretty, simpering, thin-skinned, insipid, good sort of a gentleman, Mr. Aaron Hill, whom, for no imaginable reason that we can perceive, it has been the custom to praise up in all biographies and biographical introductions, as the glory of human nature. He invented a stanza, and perpetrated much of nothing therein. Young departed so far from the established fashion as to write blank verse, but he wrote it with the cadence of the epigrammatic couplet. We cannot think, with Dr. Johnson, that his "Night Thoughts," is one of the *few* poems in which blank verse could not be exchanged for rhyme with advantage; for bad blank verse might always be advantageously exchanged for good rhyme.

Thomson, who, in his "Castle of Indolence," displays an excellent ear, is liable, in his "Seasons," to the same censure as Young; yet, with all his defects, he deserves to be called, as an enthusiastic lady denominated Mr. Kean, "Nature restored." He is a true, warm-hearted, British—ay, spite of geography, we will call him an English gentleman. Sometimes, to be sure, he took up with the cast finery of the Legitimates,—but this was the fault of his age. He is a perfect reservoir of natural images;—a man, with Thomson in his pockets, may write pastorals

and Georgics within the rules of the Bench. None did more to weaken the sway of Legitimacy, though he still continued in nominal subjection to its decrees.

At length the supremacy of the French school began to be shaken, and the Constitutional writers came into repute once more. Divers attempts were made towards a reform; blank verse abounded, and lyrics multiplied. Akenside in the former, Gray and Collins in the latter, have acquired a steady reputation. Collins, like many of the minor poets, has not obtained most popularity where most was due to him. His Passions have been spouted, *usque ad nauseam*, while his Odes to Liberty, to Fear, to Poetry, and his exquisite Address to Evening, are comparatively neglected.

Gray, Mason, and the Wartons, whatever were their individual merits, at least assisted to break the *Legitimate* spell, by reconciling the public to bolder metaphors, stronger images, and more varied cadence; while Akenside restored somewhat of the old energy of thought and gravity of diction. His best work is his "Hymn to the Naïads." His blank verse is constructed with considerable skill; it reminds you of Milton, without servilely following him.

But neither these, nor any poet of their ages, were possessed of that universality, that deep and germinative knowledge, which distinguishes the earlier Constitutionalists. They were retired persons, who obtained a *negative* sort of freedom by withdrawing from society; not citizens of the world, enjoying and promoting general liberty. They earned, however,

for the most part, the censure of Johnson, the great champion of the Legitimates, who upheld their theories when their practice began to decline. Goldsmith, Cowper, and Burns, were independent men of no party, though the first kept within the rules of Legitimacy. But he had too much heart, and too continuous feelings, to belong properly to the school.

Cowper and Burns owe much of their reputation to adventitious circumstances; yet they fully deserve it all. Cowper was indebted to his religious connexions, and to the admissibility of his poems into the libraries of godly persons: yet they are entitled to better company than much that they will find there. Burns's fame was helped on by his condition and his country, for it is an honourable propensity of "Jews, Scotsmen, and other imperfect sympathies," to foster, or, at worst, to puff one another. But yet, neither Burns nor Cowper needed these foreign aids. As great a reputation as they enjoy they would have enjoyed without them, though, perhaps, more tardily.

Churchill, though an ultra-Whig in his politics, must be classed with the Legitimates in poetry. He inherited their point and sarcasm, with somewhat more of Juvenalian vigour and animosity. Their floweriness he probably rejected, and their polish he had not time to attain.

The school of Pope can scarcely be said to have been overthrown by the Revolution. It had long been wearing out by a gradual slow decay.

We know not whether Darwin can fairly be reckoned among its disciples; the laboured lusciousness

of his lines bears no resemblance to Pope's smooth poignancy, and his exclusive attention to the forms of external nature prevents any similitude of matter. Of Hayley we know nothing. Rogers still survives, like one of those gentlemen of the old court, whom we occasionally meet with in society, obstinately retaining their satin waistcoats and ruffles, their low bows, and antiquated gallantry.

Meanwhile, all things were preparing for change. The minds of men were called to the contemplation of first principles. Dogmas, which had been held indisputable, were weighed in the balance and found wanting; and the portentous creations of German fancy affected poetry much as the American revolution influenced politics. It is not from a mere coincidence of time that we have bestowed on a modern class the title of the *Revolutionary School*, nor solely from that audacity of innovation, that contempt for established authorities, which was so remarkably contrasted with the prescriptions of the Legitimates. There is a yet deeper propriety in the name. Both the politicians and the poets of *this* school referred everything to nature, to pure unmodified nature, as they imagined her to exist before the growth of social institutions. Whatever was acquired, whatever was positive, whatever would not bow to a levelling, universal reason, was to be cast as a noisome weed away. Some, indeed, pretended to a certain imitation of classical models, especially in those points, such as metres and universal suffrage, in which the ancients had been formerly supposed least imitable; but the greater

part set up for unmitigated originality; and, doubtless, much that was original, much that was of great promise, much that will be remembered, when the storms that accompanied its birth are *but* remembered, was produced at that time.

But licence sprang up with liberty; the strong used their strength tyrannously, and the feeble, casting away the restraints which had served to conceal and bolster up their feebleness, exposed themselves pitiably. All mankind became statesmen, and a very large part of them, to say nothing of womankind, became poets; and the Revolutionists of both classes had a strong tendency to form associations, as witness the "Florence Miscellany," and the "Corresponding Society." Happily, the poetical anarchy has not been succeeded by despotism; but, on the other hand, many approaches have been made to the restoration of the true old Constitution.

Still, however, our poetical theories are almost as imperfect as our political ones; and, as we have already hinted, from similar causes—namely, a partial view of nature, an exclusive devotion to some of the elements of society, with a total disregard of the rest.

It is too often forgotten, moreover, that neither states nor men can return to infancy, They may, indeed, sink back to its ignorance and impotence; but its beauty, its innocence, and docility, once past, are flown for ever. It is a paradise from which we are quickly sent forth, and a flaming sword prohibits our regress thither. Those who cry up the sim-

plicity of old times ought to consider this. Human nature, and entire human nature, is the poet's proper study. With external nature he has nothing to do, any farther than as it influences the passions, the affections, or the imaginations of his fellow-men. Besides, Nature, as presented to the senses, is mere chaos. It is the mind that gives form, and grace, and beauty, and sublimity; and from that same mind the institutions and the prejudices of social life derive their being. Poetry, in short, has become too romantic, and the world is too little so.

The Revolution has not yet subsided, but the rage of late has been rather for Restoration and importation, than for absolute novelty. Our elder dramatists have been closely imitated by men who have succeeded in giving their bloom and fragrance, but the soul and substance are still to be supplied. The lighter Italian poets have been felicitously imitated. The heathen deities have been recalled from the transportation to which they were sentenced by the gruff infallibility of Johnson; and a recent attempt has been made to accommodate us with a Grecian metre.

It is a little remarkable, that the most strenuous supporter of poetical *Legitimacy* in the present day should be the encomiast of Napoleon, and the derider of all social institutions; while the most loyal of laurelled Bards continues a decided Revolutionist in the state of the Muses.

THERSITES.

Nov. 1821.

ON THE POETICAL USE OF THE HEATHEN MYTHOLOGY.

"These were immortal stories."—*Barry Cornwall.*

THE present is, doubtless, an æra of restorations and revivals, political and poetical. The Bourbons have returned to the throne of France, and the Gods and Goddesses of classic fame, with all the noblesse of Fauns and Satyrs, Dryads and Hamadryads, are beginning to re-occupy, with limited sway, their ancient places in poetry.

Keats, Cornwall, and Shelley have breathed a new life into the dry bones of old mythology; and even Mr. Wordsworth, notwithstanding his avowed preference for the merely and familiarly natural, has not only done ample justice, in one of the finest passages of the Excursion, to the creating spirit of ancient fable, but has shown a fondness, of late, for classical tales and images.

We cannot help thinking, however, that the immortal emigrants have acquired new manners, and almost new faces, in their exile. They seem to rely less on their antiquity, and more on their beauty and accomplishments. They are far less obtrusive and assuming; but, at the same time, they have lost

somewhat of that strength and manliness which distinguished them in the best periods of Greece and Rome, and are become refined and delicate, almost finical. They are invested with an exquisite tenderness; a soft and melting radiance; a close and affectionate affinity to the gentler parts of nature; but they have no longer that stern and venerable simplicity with which they appeared in nations where they were the objects of adoration. A similar change took place in the later times of Roman, and even of Grecian literature, particularly among the Sicilian and Alexandrian writers. Bion, and Moschus, and Theocritus represent their deities as most delightfully pretty and feminine, except they introduce them expressly as objects of terror. Indeed Claudian and Statius occasionally dilate, with such elaborate and brilliant minuteness, on the smallest beauties of form or hue, that their descriptions convey no more feeling of substance than the prismatic colours on a sheet of paper. "But this sort of frigid Dutch painting is seldom to be found in the Greeks, whose Gods are generally tangible as well as visible. But when physical strength ceases to be regarded with esteem, it is very difficult to impart awe or reverence to finite forms. The gradual decay of polytheism may very perceptibly be traced from Homer to the last profane writers of the lower empire. In fact, the Romans had ceased to be a religious before they became in any degree a poetical people. Even while they were so famed for devoutness, it is more than probable that their theological system had very little of the

imaginative character of the Grecian. It was more simple, more serious, more political, more connected with temporary institutions, and less with general nature and metaphysical speculation. The Latin poets imitated the Greeks in mythology as in all other things, but not always with equal judgment. They now and then drop hints of a graver philosophy, sometimes even of tenets altogether at variance with the popular belief. Their divinities are often half real and half allegorical; sometimes mere personified abstractions, and sometimes, especially as above stated, in the later writers, mere shapes, gratuitous combinations of the fancy. All these inconsistencies indicate that the true spirit of pagan theology had evaporated. There is no sincerity in the religion of Roman writers. They are not in earnest. They employ their fanciful wits and elegant invention to give a gay image of what they know to be an airy nothing. The strongest exception to these observations is the Atys of Catullus, a poem truly Grecian in its feeling, if not in its origin. But of their general truth it is not difficult to select instances, though their force is rather to be gathered from the pervading spirit of the authors than from isolated passages. Horace, an Epicurean, writes odes to Jupiter,—a neat vehicle for compliments to Mæcenas and Augustus. There is no more faith in his invocation to Venus than in his panegyrics on temperance, if indeed the latter were not written in the brief sincerity of bile and indigestion. He addresses the deities with the smooth strains of a laureate, but

not with the emotion of a devotee; and when he describes the vision of Bacchus among the nymphs, his *credite posteri* imposes a burden on posterity he would have been very loth himself to pay. But the good-humoured lord of the Sabine farm should never have put his Pegasus on a gallop, nor himself into a passion. He is not, like Nick Bottom, "fit for a part to tear a cat in." He has no enthusiasm of any sort, unless it be in speaking of himself. He sings delightfully in his natural tenor, but his bravura is feeble, and a complete falsetto.

Horace, however, was professedly—

"Parcus deorum cultor et infrequens,"

and probably his conversion from the Epicurean tenets by the thunder-storm was as lasting as the generality of his resolutions.

But Virgil has been commended for the piety of his sentiments, almost as much as for the elegance of his imagery, the depth of his pathos, or the flow of his numbers. It is not very easy to discover from his writings what was his real religion, or whether he had any clear or serious belief in personal and intelligent deities. His Jupiter, Juno, Venus, &c., are transferred from Homer, with some improvement in their manners, but none at all in their morals. He has taken no pains to bring them into keeping with the Platonic and pantheistic philosophy which he puts into the mouth of the shade Anchises, nor even with the improved state of ethical knowledge displayed in the language and sentiments of his

mortal characters. Hence his Gods appear worse than his men, and his men, acting under the guidance of his Gods, seem worse than themselves. Hence, too, arises an inconsistency, too common in narrative poems of which the scene is laid in barbarous ages and countries: the sentiments are at variance with the conduct. The age of Homer is confounded with that of Augustus. Neither is Virgil entirely free from imperfect personifications, the poetical sin which most easily besets mythology. Thus, in describing the descent of Mercury upon Mount Atlas, he forgets that Atlas could not at once be a mountain and a giant.

"—— Jamque volans apicem et latera ardua cernit
Atlantis duri, cœlum qui vertice fulcit;
Atlantis, cinctum assidue cui nubibus atris
Piniferum caput et vento pulsatur et imbri:
Nix humeros infusa tegit; tum flumina mento
Præcipitant senis, et glacie riget horrida barba.
Hic primum paribus nitens Cyllenius alis
Constitit; hinc toto præceps se corpore ad undas
Misit: avi similis, quæ circum litora, circum
Piscosos scopulos, humilis volat æquora juxta.
* Haud aliter terras inter cœlumque volabat.
Litus arenosum Libyæ, ventosque secabat,
Materno veniens ab avo Cyllenia proles."

Æneid. l. iv. 246.

The epithet *senis*, applied to a mountain, the ice on his beard, and the rivers gushing from his chin, might be supposed to be figurative, though, even then, they would be scarcely worthy of Virgil; but when Mercury precipitates himself from his maternal

* It is but fair to say that these last lines are by Heyne supposed to be spurious.

grandfather, we have only to choose between conceit and confusion.

These inconsistencies, however little they may detract from the transcendant merit of the Æneid, tend to prove that "the intelligible forms of old religion" had neither a correspondent substance in the belief of Virgil, nor even a distinct and permanent existence in his imagination. His Gods "savour not of the reality." They are not altogether like those of Homer, individuals composed of flesh and blood; nor, like those of the mysteries, symbols of general truths or eternal powers. They are mere creatures of memory and tradition, and may be compared to the figures of an old painting grown dim by time, and retouched by a modern artist, with exquisite skill indeed, yet so that the modern is plainly discernible.

So far, however, from wishing to diminish the fame of the Mantuan by one iota, we would fain be persuaded that his very incongruities are the result of refined judgment and consummate art. If the skill of a great musician is displayed in the agreeable management of discords, why may not a poet deserve praise by a judicious use of inconsistencies? The truth is, every writer reflects something of the spirit of his own age; and the age of Virgil was, in respect to religious belief, an inconsistent one. The motley garb of paganism was thread-bare, full of rents, and patched with purple shreds of philosophy, that set off its bareness, and added to its raggedness. Still it was the state uniform, and could not conveniently be thrown aside. Jupiter and Juno were deities by law

established, and the ceremonials of polytheism were associated with the institutions of the commonwealth. The family pride of the great, the national pride of the many, were interested in maintaining the ancient superstition. The Gods and Goddesses had made themselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, and were strongly intrenched amid shows and pedigrees. Nor were they unsupported by better feelings, and deeper interests. The sanctity of oaths—the dignity of magistrates—the discipline of armies, were in danger of perishing with the national religion: and all the glories of Rome pleaded in its favour. However little, therefore, the faith of the speculative may have been in that multitudinous rout of deified heroes, and canonised demireps, abstract qualities, and dead, or, at best, unintelligent powers of nature, —aliens, denizens, and natives, Gods by custom, and Gods by statute, whose number was yearly increasing till their very names defied all power of memory, the prevailing system was still hallowed by antiquity, and adorned with splendour;—strong recommendations to a people who had recently exchanged the severity of soldiers for the ostentation of conquerors, —not zealous for truth, but passionate for glory.

Yet while so many causes conjoined to uphold the ancient signs, their ancient significance was gliding fast away. The Roman religion not being of such a catholic and accommodating character as the Greek, probably suffered much more from the fashionable systems of philosophy. Literal belief was confined to the vulgar, and among them, we may conjecture,

to such as were placed out of contact with the half-learned. The disciples of Epicurus, and those of Carneades, and the third academy, alike confident and self-satisfied,—the former pretending to know all things, and the latter as vain of their discovery that nothing is to be known,—by inducing a decay of natural religion, withdrew its support and nourishment from those parasitical superstitions which indicated its vital presence while they concealed its true proportions. The stoics, professing the most implicit reverence for all that had the sanction of age and authority, talking much of providence, much of the Divinity, much even of an hereafter,—by the very sternness of their doctrines, by their pretended indifference to all contingencies, and by their assertion of an absolute free-will, co-existing with an absolute fate,—a system, in its consequences, approaching to quietism,—left their Gods, in the end, little more effective than those of the Epicureans. For if virtue be the only good, and vice the only evil, and man can attain to the one, and avoid the other, without Divine assistance,—if each individual is, or may be, lord of all within, and an inexorable destiny disposes of all without,—what place is there for religion? Neither could the antique faith look for protection or sincere alliance to the Platonists; though some of their successors, in an after age, were induced to lend their support to declining paganism, and to find in the abstruser doctrines of their founder a ready and specious defence for the fables which provoked him to banish Homer from his republic. But the philo-

sophers were never auxiliaries to the popular religion, till they were the enemies of Christianity. In no dissimilar spirit some of the German Illuminati have ranged themselves under the banners of popery. But the purer and elder Platonism is, perhaps, the nearest approach to Christian truth that unassisted reason has ever made: and if in some of its speculations it exceeds the limits of the understanding, without attaining to a region of purer light;—if, without due commission, it has presumed to draw "empyreal air;"—still its presumption is of a more amiable kind, more akin to faith, and hope, and adoration, than the conceited *nonchalance* of the Epicurean, or the self-centering pride of the Stoic. It does, however fancifully, or with whatever mixture of error, it does communicate a hint at the great truth, that man is upon earth a stranger and a pilgrim; it does, obscurely indeed, yet not unintelligibly, point at the fact, that human nature, as it exists, is a fallen thing, and not, as Mr. Pope would persuade us, good, as the nature of beasts, in its own low degree; it does catch a glimpse of that ideal of divine humanity, in which the individual man discovers his own vileness, and grows humble by the contemplation of glory. It does not, indeed,—neither could it,—reveal the mysteries of the Gospel; but it turned the minds of men to the direction in which they were to come. It withdrew them from the things of time and sense, and excited a yearning after the eternal and invisible.

To a soul possessed with such desires, the worship of the finite must needs have been weary, flat, stale,

and unprofitable. A true Platonist must, at least, have been indifferent to a religion like the Roman; a palpable state ordinance, the guardians of which had burned the works of its founder. A creed which could never have been, if Rome had not been, could have little in it to satisfy the searchers for universal, everlasting, necessary truth.

But philosophers did not preach to the poor, and pretty generally admitted the expediency of restraining the populace by the chains of sensual superstition. The most enlightened of the heathen, with all their democratic zeal, had no notion of an equality of moral rights, of that equality which is implied by the phrase, "Every man has a soul to be saved."

A far more active agent than philosophy was stealing away the life of the popular faith, and turning the time-hallowed ceremonies into mere pageants. The Romans were fast verging to Cosmopolitism. Their religion was Roman exclusively. Their country was the true God of their idolatry, and patriotism the ground and stuff of their piety. Their mythology was built up while they were a small and concentrated nation, strongly opposed to all other nations. Now Rome was all the world, and Roman rather a title of honour than a national distinction. Of all human events, it is probable that the blending of nations into one universal empire did most to weaken the influence of polytheism, and prepare the world for Christianity, the whole world's religion. Just in proportion as the feeling of country became less intense, the reverence for local and tutelary deities

diminished, and a craving void was left for emotions of deeper and more catholic devotion.

Such being the state of belief and unbelief in the Augustan age,—so many interests combining to support the rites and fictions of antiquity, while their power and significance was daily lessening,—those who wished to maintain the old Roman character for devoutness, and yet to escape the ridicule attached to old-fashioned credulity, would naturally be put upon inventing new meanings for old words,—an infallible symptom of the decline of vital religion. Some would explain away, and some would allegorise, and labour with perverse and unprofitable industry to convert the toys of childhood into tools and weapons for maturity. One man would discover that all mythology was composed of enigmatical representations of natural philosophy; and what wonder, when a baronet of the 19th century, a man of no small learning and ingenuity, and not a Frenchman, takes pains to assure us, that the twelve patriarchs were neither more nor less than the twelve signs of the zodiac? Another, with equal gravity, would endeavour to prove that all the luscious stories of Venus and Adonis, the amours of Jupiter, and the revels of Bacchus, were moral apologues in commendation of chastity and sobriety; and a third, of less airy genius, would find out that Janus was only a prudent king, who calculated correctly upon consequences, and Prometheus a great astronomer, who had an observatory on Mount Caucasus, and induced a liver complaint by intense application. These divers interpretations,

physical, ethical, and historical, swarmed in latter times, increasing with the increase of Christianity, and originating more in the spirit of controversy, which would give up no point of the system it was defending, than in any conviction of their probability. But something of the kind must always take place where a respect for words and forms survives the notions or feeling which gave those words and forms a meaning. There are some, who call themselves Christians, who are not ashamed to use similar double dealing with the Bible.

The general effect of all this must have coincided with the discussions of the philosophers—and that enfeebling of local and national attachments, which is an almost certain attendant on advanced civilisation, and in Rome was accelerated by the loss of liberty and the corruption of manners,—to destroy all distinct conceptions as to the nature or personality of the objects of worship. The confusion, from which paganism is never perfectly free, of presiding powers with that over which they were supposed to preside,—of Neptune with the sea,—of Jupiter with the upper air, &c.—would be much increased, so that the most correct taste could hardly escape it. When Gods become metaphors, and metaphors pass into the current language, it is difficult indeed to treat of a mythological subject, without an occasional jumble.

To apply these observations (which we are afraid have grown rather *lengthy*) to the subject from whence they arose; if Virgil's mythology had been as distinct and uniformly consistent as that of Homer, it might

have been more gratifying to good taste at present, but it would not have suited Virgil's age, or reflected the opinions of his contemporaries. His poem is, throughout, an offering to Roman vanity,—a grand national poem,—and could hardly have seemed enough in earnest without a touch of philosophy; even a little confusion of phrase was necessary to represent the prevailing confusion of ideas. But these arguments are not meant to excuse such modern writers as are guilty of similar incongruities. We have our choice between the simpler and the more mystical theologies of the ancients. We are at liberty to represent the Gods as we please: we are not bound to an agreement with the notions of any period of Greece or Rome, and so can on no account be discharged from the duty of agreeing with ourselves.

The Gods of Homer are healthy, living bodies; those of Virgil exhibit some signs of approaching dissolution. Those of the later Romans are seldom better than pictures; often no more than names.

We have hitherto considered chiefly the hollow surface of mythology, as it existed after the life and shaping power was gone, in a corrupt and unimaginative age, when poetry was verging to two extremes; to mere arbitrary fiction on the one hand, and to mere matter-of-fact representation, or exaggeration, malicious or adulatory, of the follies, vices, and wonders of the day. If we except the satirists, the best writers, even of the court of Augustus, were but as mountain tops, reflecting the light of the mighty orbs of song below the horizon; and this light was cast

yet more faintly on their successors. It is, indeed, much to be regretted, that the ancient poets persevered in the choice of mythological subjects, after the true mythological spirit was gone out of the world. Many of the Latins have shown powers of deep and human pathos, which make us regret that they should have continued to talk of Gods, and Goddesses, and heroes, when it is evident they could have made men and women so much more interesting.

We are too much in the habit of classing the Greeks and Romans together, and considering their religion as the same; but this impression (it cannot be called an opinion) is highly erroneous. No two nations could be of more distinct characters, as is proved by the ridiculous affectation of Grecism, that was prevalent in the decline of Rome. The Roman mythology is fallen with Rome; indeed it may be said to have fallen with the republic: that of Greece will probably survive, as long as poetry continues to season the dull clod of earth. Less darkly impressive than the Gothic, less fantastically gorgeous than the Oriental, it stands unrivalled in the beautiful simplicity of its forms, the pregnancy of its symbols, and the plastic facility with which it accommodates itself to the fancy and feelings of all mankind. The Gods of the Greeks were literally all things to all men. To the patriot, they were the guardians of his country; to the antiquary, the founders of nations, the mighty of old time. The mystic theologist adored them as signs of the infinite and eternal; and the physiologist as the unceasing operations of nature.

True it is, that in all these shades of faith, from the gross creed of the vulgar, who looked on their deities as capricious despots that were to be bribed or flattered into good humour, to the beautiful imaginations of a Plato, who sought in the depth of his own great soul for the substance of all shadows, there is no stubborn, self-asserting truth; no stuff of the conscience; no heart-searching, and no heart's cure: but there is much that soothes, and something that elevates; something that calls man out of himself, and persuades him to make interest with nature.

"The lively Grecian, in a land of hills,
Rivers and fertile plains, and sounding shores,—
Under a cope of more variable sky,
Could find commodious place for every God,
Promptly received, as prodigally brought,
From the surrounding countries, at the choice
Of all adventurers. With unrivalled skill,
As nicest observation furnished hints
For studious fancy, his quick hand bestowed
On fluent operations a fixed shape;
Metal or stone, idolatrously served.
And yet, triumphant o'er this pompous show
Of art, this palpable array of sense,
On every side encountered, in despite
Of the gross fictions chanted in the streets
By wandering Rhapsodists; and in contempt
Of doubt and bold denial hourly urged
Amid the wrangling schools—a spirit hung,
Beautiful region! o'er thy towns and farms,
Statues and temples, and memorial tombs;
And emanations were perceived; and acts
Of immortality, in Nature's course,
Exemplified by mysteries, that were felt
As bonds, on grave philosopher imposed,
And armed warrior; and in every grove
A gay or pensive tenderness prevailed,

When piety more awful had relaxed.
'Take, running river, take these locks of mine,'—
Thus would the votary say—'this severed hair,
My vow fulfilling, do I here present,
Thankful for my beloved child's return.
Thy banks, Cephisus, he again hath trod,
Thy murmurs heard; and drunk the crystal lymph
With which thou dost refresh the thirsty lip,
And, all day long, moisten these flowery fields!'
And doubtless, sometimes, when the hair was shed
Upon the flowing stream, a thought arose
Of life continuous, Being unimpaired;
That hath been, is, and where it was and is,
There shall endure,—existence unexposed
To the blind walk of mortal accident;
From diminution safe and weakening age;
While man grows old, and dwindles, and decays;
And countless generations of mankind
Depart; and leave no vestige where they trod."

WORDSWORTH.

No act in the life of a Grecian was below the notice of a deity. Business and pleasure, food and exercise, study and meditation, war and traffic, the best and the vilest deeds alike were hallowed. His creed was associated with all visible greatness, with art and nature, with high aspirings, and tender thoughts, and voluptuous fancies, with the stars of heaven, with mountains and rivers, with the tombs and the fame of his ancestors, with temples and statues, with music and poesy, with all of beauty that he saw, or loved, or longed for, or dreamed of as a possibility. His devotion was no work of a sabbath,—it mingled with his whole existence. Love was piety, a sigh was a prayer, and enjoyment was thanksgiving. The clamour of the city, the riotous joy of the vine-

yards, the tumultuous pleasure that blazes itself to darkness, the enthusiasm which makes a man a trifle to himself, the intoxication of wine and of glory, these "were no feats of mortal agency;" and who might blame the madness which a God inspired? And yet the stillest and the saddest soul that ever loved the moon and the song of the nightingale, stealing apart from the

> "Barbarous dissonance
> Of Bacchus and his revellers,"

might find a Goddess to smile on him, and turn his melancholy to a rapture. Oh! what a faith were this, if human life indeed were but a summer's dream, and sin and sorrow but a beldame's tale, and death the fading of a rainbow, or the sinking of a breeze into quiet air; if all mankind were lovers and poets, and there were no truer pain than the first sigh of love, or the yearning after ideal beauty; if there were no dark misgivings, no obstinate questionings, no age to freeze the springs of life, and no remorse to taint them.

The Grecian genius turned everything to poetry, as the touch of Midas converted all to gold, and man can no more be sustained on the one than on the other. Yet was this poetry a fair body, ready to receive any soul which will, or passion, or imagination might breathe into it. Like that umbrageous elm which Virgil has placed in the kingdom of shades, it sheltered all manner of dreams, the loveliest and the wildest, and the fellest and foulest;

perhaps a few of prophetic import, that darkly told of better things to come.

The world, as the life of man, has its several ages. The Grecian age was hot fantastic youth. Strong and beautiful, ardent in enterprise, bold in purpose, resolute in execution, subtle and disputatious, averse to rest alike of soul and body, impatient of constraint, passionate and fickle, not yet weaned from matter and sense, but refining material to ideal, and subliming sensual to spiritual, as fire invests with its own brightness the grosser aliment that feeds it.

That youth is flown for ever. We are grown up to serious manhood, and are wedded to reality. Truths which the wisest ancients sought after as precious jewels, to us are household stuff. The moral being has gained a religion, and the imagination has lost one. The sage of antiquity was like a child, who thinks there are many moons within his reach. We know that there is but one, high above our heads, whose face is mirrored in a hundred streams. Yet the shadow remains not the less because it is known to be a shadow. That shaping spirit of man, which set up Gods on every hill, and under every green tree, is degraded from its usurped functions, but it is not dead, nor will its workmanship, though condemned, be readily forgotten. Centuries have passed since the classic deities received their latest worship, and yet they still survive, to fancy and to memory, green with immortal youth, "in form as palpable" as when mightiest nations adored them. Even when temple and altar were

overthrown; when pagan worship no longer lingered in the hamlets from which it derived its appellation, and only a few prohibited superstitions remained of all that gay religion, full of pomp and gold;—the mystical genius of the dark ages received the old deities in their exile, and divesting them in some measure of their beautiful distinctness, changed them into obscure powers and stellar predominances, the workers of marvels, and the arbiters of destiny. The alchemist discovered them in his crucible, and the astrologer beheld them in the stars. Ecclesiastics have anathematised them as demons, and critics as exploded impertinences, yet neither have been able to consign them to oblivion.

This can hardly be accounted for merely from the excellence of the writers who have celebrated, or the fame of the people who adored them. Man is not so utterly changed as to discern no truth or fitness in that beautiful pile of representative fiction, which Greece built up in the years of her pride and energy. An instinct, like that which impels and enables the testaceous fishes to fashion their shells to the projections and declivities of their own bodies, induced the nations that were left bare of revelation to weave a fabric of fables, accommodated to the wants and yearnings of their own minds. These wants and yearnings are many and various; some heavenly, and many earthly; and a few that are neither of earth nor heaven. The mythology of the Greeks bears witness to their diversity; it is a "mingled yarn," in which the poetry of human nature is

intertwined with its homelier affections and darker passions. It had forms of ideal beauty, and impersonations of heroic energies. It had household Gods, to sanctify the feeling of hearth and home, and funereal rites, that spake of immortality; tutelary deities, whose common worship united nations; and store of tales, that hallowed and endeared each common act and usage of life. But it had also bloody sacrifices, and unutterable abominations, and superstitions that confounded guilt and misfortune, and Gods that authorised the passions by which they were made Gods. Nor was the ancient system untainted by that spirit of slavish fear, which is the fertile root of cruelty and madness: far unlike the holy fear which seeks no defence but humility and purity. Such mixture of good and evil proclaims that this religion was the work of man; deeply sullied with his vices, yet not wholly unredeemed by reflections from his better part.

The tendency of the Greek imagination was to the finite rather than to the infinite; to physical and visible strength, rather than to obscure and magical power. The simplicity of primitive Gentile faith everywhere beheld the semblance of human agency,

> "And purposes akin to those of man,
> But wrought with mightier arm than now prevails."
> WORDSWORTH'S *Excursion*. B. 3.

Far unlike that mechanical philosophy which represents nature as inert and passive; and scarce less at variance with that vague pantheism, which gives her

indeed a soul, but a soul without mind, a force that is spent in its own product, a spirit everywhere diffused, and nowhere concentrated;—the shaping and vivifying genius of the Greeks attributed a conscious, individual, intelligent life to each and all of her forms, her motions, and her many voices; and even in her still and changeless masses, her mountains, and rocks, and chasms, it recognised the workings of energies now stunned or in slumber. In the return of seasons, the increase and decrease of tides, and the cycles of the heavens, it discovered a likeness to will, forethought, and recollection, and an image of human love and hate in the sympathies and antipathies of bodies.

Even now, when the religion of Grecian bards is only remembered in their songs, there are some excursive minds who delight to range in its unchecked liberty; some playful fancies, that take pleasure in repeating the illusions from which it arose; and some of tenderer natures, that find solace in adopting its forms and phrases, as a guise for thoughts too subtle, and feelings too delicate, to venture forth unveiled. It is a soothing dream, (and who can prove it but a dream?) that the emotions of our hearts, the imaginations that come we know not whence, the whispers that console or awaken, flow from a higher fountain than the dark well of our own individuality; and yet the instinct of humanity would persuade us that they proceed from beings that partake enough of human frailty to afford it an understanding and experienced sympathy. True it

is, that these conceits will not bear reasoning upon. Like glow-worms or fire-flies, they should be looked at by no light but their own. They bear a closer resemblance to flowers than to pot-herbs; but their roots are deep in our nature, and their fragrance is "redolent of spring." As articles of faith they cannot be commended; but yet, they are beautiful fancies: and if they were ever pernicious, they now have lost their venom, and may serve to show how much, and how little, the unaided intellect can effect for itself: as sometimes the dim outline of the moon appears by day, to inform us how the night is preserved from darkness.

"The intelligible forms of ancient poets,
The fair humanities of old religion,
The power, the beauty, and the majesty,
That had their haunts in dale, or piny mountain,
Or forest, by slow stream, or pebbly spring,
Or chasms, and watery depths; all these have vanish'd:
They live no longer in the faith of reason;
But still the heart doth need a language; still
Doth the old instinct bring back the old names;

* * * *
* * * *
* * * *

And even at this day,
'Tis Jupiter who brings whate'er is great,
And Venus who brings every thing that 's fair."

SCHILLER'S *Wallenstein*. Part I.

THERSITES.

ON BLACK CATS.

Sleep thou in peace, my sable Selima, rest and be thankful, for thou wert born in an enlightened age, and in a family of females, and elderly gentlemen. Well is it for thee, that thou wert not cotemporary with the pious Baxter, that detester of superstition; or the learned Sir Thomas Brown, the exploder of vulgar errors; or the great Sir Matthew Hale, whose wholesome severities against half-starved sorceresses, so aptly illustrated his position, that Christianity is "parcel of the common law of England;" rest, I say, and be thankful, for the good old times had been bitter times for thee.

Why should colour excite the malignant passions of man? Why will the sole patentee of reason, the *soi disant* lord of creation, degrade himself to the level of the turkey-cock, that is filled with rage and terror at a shred of scarlet? What is a hue—an absorbed or reflected ray, or, as other sages tell, a mere extended thought—that we should love or hate it? Yet such is man, with all his boasted wisdom. Ask why the Negro is a slave? He 's black, not like a Christian. Why should Bridget's cat be worried?

Why, to be sure, she 's black, an imp of darkness, the witch's own familiar; nay, perhaps, the witch herself in disguise; a thing most easily put to proof; for if you knock out Grimalkin's eye, Bridget will appear next day with only one; maim the cat, its mistress halts; stab it, she is wounded. Such are the dangers of necromantic masquerading, when the natural body is punished with the stripes inflicted on the assumed one: and this was once religion with royal chaplains, and philosophy with the Royal Society!

These superstitions are gone: this baseless fabric of a vision is dissolved; I wish that it had left not a wreck behind. But when Satan disappears, an unsavoury scent remains behind him; and from the carcass of buried absurdity, there often proceeds an odour of prejudice—the more distressing, because we know not whence it comes. Neither elderly ladies nor black cats are now suspected of witchcraft; yet how seldom are they fully restored to their just estimation in the world.

Be it perverseness, or be it pity, or be it regard for injured merit, I confess myself an advocate for the human tabbies, so famed for loquacity, and for their poor dumb favourites in black velvet.

Whether it be true, that Time, which has such various effects on divers subjects, which is so friendly to wine, and so hostile to small beer, which turns abuse to right, and usurpation to legitimacy, which improves pictures while it mars their originals, and raises a coin no longer current to a hundred times

the value it ever went for;—whether this wonder-working Time be able to deface the loveliness of woman, shall be a subject for future inquiry. But, my pretty Selima; thou that, like Solomon's bride, art black, but comely; thee, and thy kind—the sable order of the feline sisterhood, I would gladly vindicate from those aspersions, which take occasion from the blackness of thy coat to blacken thy reputation.

Thy hue denotes thee a child of night; Night, the wife of Chaos, and, being a female, of course the oldest female in being. How aptly, therefore, dost thou become the favourite of those ladies, who, though not so old as night, are nevertheless in the evening of their days. Thou dost express thy joy at the return of thy mother, even as the statue of Memnon at the approach of her rival, frisking about in thy mourning garb by moonlight, starlight, or no light, an everlasting merry mourner; and yet a mute in dress, and silence too, not belying thy name by volubility.

How smooth, how silky soft are thy jetty hairs! A peaceful multitude, wherein each knows its place, and none obstructs its neighbours. Thy very paws are velvet, and seem formed to walk on carpets of tissue. What a pretty knowing primness in thy mouth, what quick turns of expression in thy ears, and what maiden dignity in thy whiskers. Were it not for thine emerald eyes, and that one white hair on thy breast, which I abstain from comparing to a single star in a cloudy sky, or a water lily lying on a black lake, (for, in truth, it is like neither,) I

should call thee nature's monochrom. And then the manifold movements of thy tail, that hangs out like a flag of truce, and the graceful sinuosity of thy carriage, all bespeak thee of the gentle kind. False tokens all: thou canst be furious as a negro despot; thy very hairs, if crossed, flash fire. Thou art an earth-pacing thunder-cloud, a living electric battery, thy back is armed with the wrath of Jove.

Hence do thy enemies find occasion to call thee a daughter of darkness, clad in Satan's livery—a patch on the fair face of nature; and therefore an unseemly relic of a fashion, not only unbecoming in itself, but often perverted to the purposes of party.

Yet, my Selima, if thy tribe have suffered much from the follies of mankind, they have profited by them also. If the dark age looked black upon them; if the age of black arts, black friars, and black letter set them in its black-book, and delivered over their patronesses to the blackness of darkness; yet time hath been when they partook of the honour and worship paid to all their species, while they walked in pride at the base of the pyramids, or secreted their kittens in the windings of the labyrinth. Then was their life pleasant, and their death as a sweet odour.

This was, indeed, common to all thy kind, however diversified by colour, or divided by condition.—Tabby and tortoise-shell, black, white, and grey, tawny and sandy, gib and grimalkin, ye were a sacred race, and the death of one of you was mourned as a brother's—if natural; and avenged as a citizen's—if violent: and

this in the cradle of the sciences, (so called, I presume, because the sciences were babies there,) and in spite of the 700,000 volumes of Alexandria.

Yet I cannot but think that the wise Egyptians distinguished black with peculiar reverence. We know that their religion, like their writing, was hieroglyphical; that their respect for various animals was merely symbolical; that under the form of the ox, they gratefully remembered the inventor of agriculture, and adopted a beetle as the representative of the sun. Now, of how many virtues, how many powers, how many mysteries may not a black cat be an emblem? As she is cat, of vigilance; as she is black, of secresy: as both, of treachery, one of the greatest of political virtues, if we judge from the high rewards continually given, and daily advertised for it. Again, we know the annual circle, and the signs by which it was measured, was another object of idolatry; but one ample half of time is typified by a black cat.

But should these deep speculations be deemed mystical by the present age, which, if it be an age of light, is certainly an age of lightness, it may, at least, be admitted, that the Egyptians would prefer their own colour, and we are assured by Volney and others, that they were not only black, but literally negroes.

As for the esteem they entertained for cats in general, we may account for it on the supposition, that they were delivered, at some period of their history, in an extraordinary manner, from a swarm of rats, either national or political. And that the

agents of this deliverance were represented under the feline figure, which may be plausibly considered as a bodily representative of the spirit of reform.

After all, Selima, I doubt whether thou hast lost as much by never being worshipped as thou hast gained by living in a Christian country. State is burdensome, and superstition is seldom prone to regard its objects with affection.

But there is one of thy hue whose condition might have been envied by all the sacred mousers of Egypt. Well may she be proud and coy, whom fate has appointed, not to be the idol of the children of Ham, but the favourite of the loveliest of the daughters of Britain.

ΑΙΛΟΤΡΟΦΙΛΟΣ.

BRIEF OBSERVATIONS UPON BREVITY.

"BREVITY," says Polonius, "is the soul of wit," and twenty men as wise as he have said so after him. "Truth," says Mr. Stephen Jones, the worthy compiler of various Biographical, Geographical, and Lexicographical Duodecimos, "is the soul of my work, and brevity is its body." Strange quality, that can at once be body and soul! Rare coincidence, that the soul of wit should be the body of a pocket dictionary.

Many excellent things, good reader of six feet high, partake of the property which thou dost look down upon, or else overlook, so scornfully. To take a few casual instances, such as life, pleasure, a good style, and good resolutions, all which are notoriously, nay, proverbially *brief*, would scantly raise the matter to the altitude of the apprehension. Go then, and learn by experience; read lawyers' briefs without a fee; study the Statutes at Large; regale thyself with Viner's Abridgement: if thou beest a tradesman, give long credit; if thou dost set a value on the moments, bind thine ears to seven hours' apprenticeship to the British Senate, or the British Forum: or, if thou canst, recal the days of Auld Lang Syne, of

long sermons, and the long Parliament; when the long-winded preachers were accustomed to hold forth over their glasses, to the long-eared and long-suffering multitude: over their glasses, I say, but not such glasses as were wont to inspire the tragic sublimity of Æschylus, the blistering humour of Aristophanes, and the blustering humour of Old Ben; not such glasses as whetted the legal acumen of Blackstone, and assisted the incomparable Brinsley to weep for the calamities of India. No, my jovial friends, the Gospel trumpeters were as dry as they were lengthy. Their glasses were such as that which old Time is represented as running away with, though in sober truth they run, or rather creep, away with him; such glasses as we naturally associate with a death's head, a college fag, or a lawyer's office. Should a modern pulpit orator undertake to preach by the hour-glass, I am inclined to think he would be building his hopes of preferment on a sandy foundation, and would most probably see his congregation run out before his sand. At all events, he would make the world (meaning thereby the parish clerk, and charity children, who were compelled to a final perseverance) as much in love with brevity, as if they had each inherited a chancery suit, or had their several properties charged with long annuities.

I am brief myself; brief in stature, brief in discourse, short of memory and money, and far short of my wishes. In most things, too, I am an admirer of brevity; I cannot endure long dinners. All the delicate viands that sea and land, with all the points

"on the shipman's card," produce, are not so irresistible a temptation to gluttony, as the ennui of a needless half-hour at table: certain motions of the jaws are undoubtedly infectious; such are laughing, yawning, and eating. Should the nightmare, "and her nine fold," descend visibly upon the dishes; should indigestion, after the old fashion, assume the shape of Abernethy to admonish me, and gout appear in the yet more formidable likeness of a racking toe, the mere dead weight of time would turn the balance of my resolves. I am partial to short ladies. Here I shall be told, perhaps, that the Greeks include size in their ideal of beauty; that all Homer's fair ones are "large and comely," and that Lord Byron has expressed his detestation of "dumpy women." All this is very true, but what is it all to me? Women are not ideals, nor do we love or admire them as such; Homer makes his heroes tall as well as his heroines; there cannot, as Falstaff says, be better sympathy. And as for his Lordship, when I am the Grand Turk, he shall choose for me. I revere the sex as much as any man, but I do not like to look up to them. I had rather be consorted "with the youngest wren of nine," than with any daughter of Eve whose morning stature was taller than my evening shadow. Whatever such an Amazon might condescend to say to me, it would sound of "nothing but low and little." Those pretty diminutives, which in all languages are the terms of affection, from her lips would seem like personalities; she could have but one set of phrases for fondness and for scorn. If

I would "whisper soft nonsense in her ear," I must get on my legs, as if I were going to move a resolution; if in walking I would keep step with her, I must stride as if I were measuring the ground for two duellists, one of whom was my very good friend, and the other a very good shot. Should I dance with her, (alas, I am past my dancing days,) I should seem like a cock-boat tossing in a storm, at the stern of a three-decker. And should I wed her: (proh dolor; I am declared by signs infallible an old bachelor elect; cats, the coyest of the breed, leap on my knees; that saucy knave,* called the old bachelor, falls eternally to my share, and no soft look of contradiction averts the omen; candles shrink self-extinguished when I would snuff them, and no sweet voice will chide my awkwardness): but *should* I wed her, I must "stand the push of every beardless vain comparative." The young Etonian jackanapes would call us Elegiacs (carmen lugubre!) the Cantab pedants would talk of their duplicate ratios; yea, unbreeched urchins, old ale-wives, and coblers in their stalls, would cry out after us, There goes eighteen pence; and prudential punsters would wish the match might prove happy, but it was certainly very *unequal*.

But of all *long* things, there are three which I hold in special abhorrence: a long bill, a long coach, and a long debate. Bills, it must be observed, are apt to grow long in proportion as the means of paying them are short; and tradesmen do not, like "honourable

* It is needless to mention that this alludes to a Christmas gambol, wherein a particular knave in the pack is called the old bachelor, and the person drawing it is set down as a confirmed Cœlebs.

gentlemen," move for leave to bring them in. But it is not the appalling sum total that I regard. It is the mizzling insignificant items, the heart-breaking fractions, the endless subdivisions of misery, that provoke me. It is as if one were condemned to be blown up with a mass of gunpowder, and at the same time to feel the separate explosion of every grain.

Few of those pestilential vehicles called long coaches infest our roads at present; but when I was a young traveller, they were frequent, especially on the northern stages. Their external semblance was that of a hearse, and their inward accommodations might vie with those of a slave ship. An incontinent vestal might have rehearsed her living inhumation in one of them. They carried ten inside! Authors, children, and dandies, were only counted as fractions; and Daniel Lambert himself would only have been considered as an unit. Their pace was intolerably slow; their stages long; their drivers thirsty; and ale-houses innumerable. It is difficult to conceive what a variety of distress they sometimes contained. I remember a journey in one of them,—I think it was between Lancaster and Manchester, perhaps the dullest road in England,—which beat the miseries of human life hollow. It was during the high fever of trade, and just after the summer holidays. I was then a minim, and counted as nobody. Three youths, returning "unwillingly to school," with all their consolatory store of half-eaten apples and gingerbread, and with looks that indicated a woeful neglect of regimen during the vacation,

composed one passenger. The landlady of the Swan inn, in bulk a Falstaff, and clothed like the Grave-digger, ditto; (bearing a brandy-bottle, which, with most importunate civility, she proffered to the company, in spite of repeated and sincere refusals;) a consumptive gentleman, who supplied his lack of natural dimension by a huge box-coat; a sick lady, with her son, (who, by the way, was very disagreeably affected by the motion of the carriage,) her sister, and a lap-dog: a strong ministerialist of eighteen stone; and an equally violent, and almost equally bulky, partizan of opposition; (neither of these worthies was perfectly sober, and their vociferation was such as to drown every other sound, except the complaints of the sick lady, and the occasional yelping of the lap-dog;) a very smart, yet innocent-looking young woman, who was sadly pestered with the coarse gallantry of a middle-aged manufacturer of cotton; there was also a very prim and self-complacent young gentleman, who seemed to value himself much on his acute sense of the disagreeable, and not less on a peculiar delicate mode of swearing, mincing and clipping his oaths till they were almost softened into nonsense——

Such were the intestines: the roof and box were proportionably loaded. There was some little danger of breaking down, and no little fear of it. Every jolt produced a scream from the sick lady, a yelp from the lap-dog, an oath from the young gentleman, and a nauseous jest, or a vulgar proffer of service to the females, from the cotton-manufacturer. Against this chaos of discords we had to balance the momentary

interruption of the political jangle, and a shriek in exchange for the customary groans of the landlady.

Scenes of this kind are particularly distressing to children; confinement and the want of fresh air are themselves sufficiently painful to them, and they seldom possess the faculty of deriving amusement from inconveniences. But all the troubles of our progress were nothing to the intolerable stopping. All conversation, even that of the politicians, ceased instantly. Sigh answered sigh, and groans were heard in all the notes of the gamut. The very horses seemed to sympathise with the feelings of the passengers, by various inarticulate sounds expressing, not, indeed, impatience to be gone, but uneasiness at staying. It was a hopeless condition. Every face was a glass, in which one might perceive the lengthening of one's own. For the last stage, a dozing silence prevailed, which made me almost wish for noise again. Anything to drown the rumble of the wheels, and the perpetual and unavailing crack of the whip, which was applied unmercifully, and, as it were, mechanically, without the smallest acceleration.

I am not sure whether these machines have not been put down by the legislature. Would that the same august body would exercise their authority upon long speeches as well as on long coaches, and be as careful of the national time as of the bones of His Majesty's locomotive subjects. Oh! that the value of brevity were understood within the walls of St. Stephen's! I never cast an eye on the close-

printed columns of a paper, without being transported by imagination into the Speaker's chair. (I had rather be transported to Botany Bay.) How anxiously must that model of enforced patience keep watch for some irregularity! and with what joy must he seize the opportunity of crying Order! How sweet to his ears must be the sound of his own voice, thus coupled with the sense of authority!

A long debate is, to me, like a long story, of which I know the conclusion before it is begun. To read or listen to it is as tedious as to play a game which you are sure of losing, or to fight for your life when you know that, in case of defeat or victory, it is alike forfeited. The catastrophe of every discussion may be so clearly foreseen, and the very arguments, and almost the very metaphors of each member, so easily anticipated, that it is a cruel oppression to force a man to thread the intricate mazes of eloquence, in order to arrive at a point to which a hop, step, and jump, may carry him. I proposed to speak briefly of brevity, and, lo! I have produced a long discourse upon length. I intended to show that lovely things are brief, and I have digressed into an exposition of the unloveliness of lengthiness. Lest I should utterly belie my title, I will even conclude here.

TOM THUMB THE GREAT.

ATRABILIOUS REFLECTIONS UPON MELANCHOLY.

"PERFECT melancholy," says honest Ben, "is the complexion of the ass." I have heard it asserted that the observation is no longer applicable. This is certainly a broad grinning age. A grave face is no longer the frontispiece to the apocryphal book of wisdom. Gravity is laughed out of countenance.—But melancholy is not the fashion of an age, nor the whim of an individual—it is the universal humour of mankind—so far, indeed, I differ from Ben Jonson (whose memory may Heaven preserve from editorial spite, and editorial adulation!) inasmuch as I think that melancholy is a passion properly and exclusively human. The ass and the owl are solemn, the cat is demure, the savage is serious, but only the cultivated man is melancholy. Perhaps the fallen spirits may partake of this disposition. So Ben would imply by the title of his comedy, called, "The Devil is an Ass," and if, as hath been more plausibly affirmed, the devil be a great humourist, then he must needs be melancholy—for whatever tends to laughter (unless it be mere fun) proceeds from that complexion.

Melancholy can scarce exist in an undegraded spirit—it cannot exist in a mere animal. It is the

offspring of contradiction—a hybrid begotten by the finite upon infinity. It arose when the actual was divided from the possible. To the higher natures, all possible things are true; the lower natures can have no conception of an unreal possibility. Neither, therefore, can properly be supposed capable of melancholy. They may be sad indeed; but sadness is not melancholy, nor is melancholy always sadness. It is a seeking for that which can never be found—a reminiscence or an anticipation of immortality—a recognition of an eternal principle, hidden within us, crying from amidst the deep waters of the soul. Melancholy, I say, proceeds from the juxta-position of contraries—of time and eternity—of flesh and spirit—it considers human life to be a—

"Still waking sleep, that is not what it is."

Whether this consideration shall give rise to laughter or tears, to hope or to despondence, to pity or to scorn, to reverence for the better, or to contempt for the worse element, depends much upon the heart, and much on the mind. But tears and laughter are but different modes of melancholy. Hope and fear, despair and scorn, and love and pity—(when they are anything more than *mere* animal emotions) are but various manifestations of the same great power. Melancholy is the only Muse. She is Thalia and Melpomene. She inspired Milton and Michael Angelo, and Swift and Hogarth. All men of genius are melancholy—and none more so than those whose genius is comic.

Men (those I mean who are not mere animals) may be divided, according to the kind of their melancholy, into three great classes. Those who seek for the infinite, in contradistinction to the finite—those who seek for the infinite in the finite—and those who seek to degrade the finite by a comparison with the infinite. The first class comprehends philosophers and religionists; the second, poets, lovers, conquerors, misers, stock-jobbers, &c.; and the third comprises satirists, comedians, jokers of all kinds, man-haters, and woman-haters, Epicures, and *bon-vivants* in general.

The philosopher, conscious that his spiritual part requires spiritual food, and finding none such among the realities of sense, acknowledges no permanence but that of ideal truth—truth is his God. He is in love with invisible beauty. He finds harmony in dumb quantities, grace in a diagram, and sublimity in the multiplication-table. He is a denizen of the *mundus intelligibilis*, and holds the possible to be more real than reality.

The religionist, like the philosopher, craves for eternity, but his appetite is not to be satisfied with such ethereal diet. He cannot live upon matterless forms, and truths that have no life, no heart, no will. He finds that his spirit is vital as well as eternal, and therefore needs a God that is living as well as true. He longs and hopes for an actual immortality, a permanent existence, a blessedness that shall be felt and known. The heaven of philosophers is indifference, that of the religious is love.

In attributing to melancholy the origin of philo-

sophy and of religion, let me not be supposed to attribute the love of truth and holiness to any mere humour or complexion. All that I mean is, that both presuppose a consciousness of a contradiction in human nature, and a searching for the things that are not seen. No man was ever religious or philosophic who was thoroughly contented with the world as it appears.

The second class—those, namely, who imagine a spiritual power in things temporal or material, who truly seek for what they cannot find, may be said to comprise, at some period of life or other, the whole human race. All men are lovers or poets—if not in their waking moments, in their dreams. Now, it is the essence of love, of poetry, of ambition, of avarice,—in fact, of every species of passion,—to confer reality on imagination, eternity on the offspring of a moment, spirituality and permanence on the fleeting objects of sense. No man who is in love considers his mistress as a mere woman. He may be conscious, perhaps, that she is neither better nor fairer than thousands of her sex; but if he loves truly, he must know that she is something to him which she is not in herself—that love in fact is a creative power, that realizes its own dreams. The miser knows that money is more to him than metal—it is more than meat, drink, or pleasure —more than all which its earthly omnipotence can command. The lover and the miser alike are poets, for they are alike enamoured of the creature of their own imagination.

This world is a contradiction—a shade, a symbol—

and, spite of ourselves, we know that it is so. From this knowledge does all melancholy proceed. We crave for that which the earth does not contain; and whether this craving display itself by hope, by despair, by religion, by idolatry, or by atheism,—it must ever be accompanied with a sense of defect and weakness —a consciousness, more or less distinct, of disproportion between the ideas which are the real objects of desire and admiration, and the existences which excite and represent them.

The poet does that for his subject which all men do for the things they long for, and the persons they love. He makes it the visible symbol of a spiritual power. In proportion to the adequacy of these symbols, men are happy or unhappy. But few, indeed, are wholly free from an aching suspicion of their inadequacy. The satirist is the poet's contrary. The poet's office is to invest the world with light. The satirist points out the light, to convince the world of darkness. When Melancholy assumes this, its worst and most hopeless form, it generally leads into one or both of two evils:—a delight in personal power, derived solely from the exposure of others' weakness; or a gross and wilful sensuality, arising not so much from an eagerness for the things of sense, as from a contempt and unbelief, say rather an uneasy and passionate hatred, of the things of the nobler being.

E.

ANTIQUITY.

THERE is something peculiarly interesting in antiquity, independent of the interest that particular antiquities may derive from their own beauty, or even from historical association. It is Nature's factor, and represents the opposite poles of mutability and eternity.

A Roman encampment, though it be now but a green mound, and was formerly the seat of mutiny, and, in fact, little better than a den of thieves, is more poetical than a modern barrack, though tenanted by brave Britons, the veterans of Egypt, or the medalists of Waterloo. What more prosaic than a halfpenny of the last coinage? You can in no ways put a sentiment into it, unless you give it to a child to buy sugar-plums, or to a beggar, in defiance of the vagrant laws and the Mendicity Society. But let the grim visages and execrated names of Caligula or Nero be deciphered through the verdant veil of venerable verdigris, and the As, Denarius, or Teruncius (the classic simile for worthlessness) becomes precious as Queen Anne's farthings, or the crooked sixpence that heretofore served for lover's tokens. The spirit of ages invests them like a glory-cloud.

Time is a mighty leveller; yea, oftentimes makes that most precious which originally was vilest. A manuscript of Bavius, preserved from the cinders of Herculaneum, or a copy of Zoilus, traced beneath the legend of some Grecian monk, would be prized by collectors far above Virgil or Aristotle. Numismatologists are far more indefatigable in pursuit of Othos than Trajans or Antonines. What are the Pyramids? Huge piles of brick or stone, with square bases and triangular sides, reared by slaves for tyrants to moulder in,—standing evidences of heartless pride and heart-withering debasement,—ponderous burdens heaped on mother earth to defraud her of her due.

Such were they when they were new. It would have gone against one's conscience to have visited them. But it is quite otherwise now. They no longer belong to Cheops or Sesostris, Pharaohs or Ptolemies, Mamelukes or Turks, but to the imagination of mankind. It were worth a pilgrimage to see them, could seeing add anything to their power. But they are so simple both in form and association, so easily, so clearly presentible to the mind's eye, that it is doubtful whether much would be gained by viewing them with the bodily organs, beyond the satisfaction of saying and thinking that one had seen them. It were nothing to measure their bases, or take their altitude,—somewhat tedious to pore over the hieroglyphics,—not very much, except for a savant, to rummage the interior. But to conceive them, or, after all, it would be better to see them,

standing on the same earth which has entombed so many thousand generations, pointing to the self-same sky which heard the cry of the oppressed when they were building; to sink, as in a dream—

"Through the dark backward and abysm of time;"

to fancy them as bearing uncrushed the waters of a deluge, (for the tradition that they were erected by the Israelites in bondage is not confirmed by Scripture,) this is indeed sublime. There would be nothing sublime in covering the area of Lincoln's Inn Fields (said to be equal in square contents to the base of the Great Pyramid) with a fac-simile. It would be a piece of lumbering inutility. Parliament, with all its omnipotence, could not endow it with a grant of centuries. It might be voted the tomb of kings, but not the sepulchre of ages. The Pyramids are particularly happy in their locality. Under our changeful atmosphere, among fields and trees, the ever-varying, self-renewing operations of nature, they would be in too sharp contrast. In a free land of thriving industry they would be out of keeping,—they would occupy too much ground—or stand a chance of being pulled down for the value of the materials. But they harmonise admirably with a dewless heaven, a sandy waste, a people that have been. They seem like a remnant of a world that has perished,—things which the huge Titans—

"While yet there was no fear of Jove,"

might have built in wantonness, as boys pile up

stones on mountain heads. There is a sublimity in their uselessness. They should have been made when the earth bore all things spontaneously, before utility had received its name.

The Egyptians, of all nations, seem to have built and planned with the most exclusive regard to permanence. They designed to make antiquities. A dim bewildered instinct, a yearning after immortality, was the *primum mobile* of all their undertakings. They preferred an unconscious existence, in the form of hideous mummies, to utter dissolution; they feared that the bodiless spirit might lose its personal identity; and expected, or wished, after the expiration of the great cycle, to find all that they had left exactly as they left it,—the same bodies,—the same buildings,—the same obelisks, pointing at the same stars. Strange faith! that the soul, after all varieties of untried being, would return to animate a mummy.

The Greeks built for beauty; the Romans for magnificence; the Orientals for barbaric splendour; (the Chinese, indeed, for fantastic finery;) the Gothic nations for the sublimity of religious effect, or martial strength; a Dutchman builds to please himself; a sensible Englishman for convenience, others of that nation to show their wealth or their taste. But the Egyptian built in defiance of time, or rather propitiated that ruthless power, by erecting him altars whereon to inscribe his victories over all beside.

The Grecian temples and statues are only antique from the accident of being ruined or mutilated. Had we (and who will say that we never shall have)

artists capable of reproducing them, they would belong as much to the present age as to that of Pericles. The principles of grace upon which they are founded are no more Grecian than British. The Greeks, it is true, had the merit of discovering them; but any one may adopt them who can; they are never out of place, never out of date. But a Gothic cathedral is antique though entire; dilapidation is not needful to give it age. Should a modern architect succeed in rivalling the hallowed structures of our forefathers, (an event by no means probable,) still his workmanship would savour of the times of yore, of other men than we, other manners than ours. We should feel the new stone and stucco-work, the freshness of youth upon the new wonder, somewhat painfully; and, in a fanciful mood, might marvel in what cavern of the earth it had been hidden so many centuries,—by what mechanism it had been raised. It is seldom safe to imitate antiquities. An antiquity that is not ancient is a contradiction. It reminds us of something that it is not. The charm is gone. It is like the tragedy of Hamlet with the character of Hamlet omitted. In great works it is well to keep close to the eternal, to that which is never modern, and never can be antique. But it is impossible to exclude the spirit of our own age; and, therefore, to mimic that of another can only produce incongruity.

The same observations apply to books and paintings as to sculpture and architecture. Shakspeare and Homer are of all writers the least antique;

Raphael and Titian far less so than Albert Durer. Pierce Ploughman is embronzed with more years than Horace. Hesiod among the Greeks, Ennius among the Latins, have the most of this venerable incrustation.

As there are some things which never become antique, by virtue of their permanent and catholic excellence, so others are excluded from that character by their worthlessness. The full-bottomed periwig, and the hooped petticoat, are out of fashion; and should they be treasured in museums, or recorded in pictures, till Plato's great year is completed, they will only be out of fashion still. Some people say there is no antiquity like that of nature, but this is not true. Nature, indeed, has her antiquities; but they are not the sun, the moon, and the stars, nor the overflowing ocean, nor the eternal hills. These are all exempt from time; they never were new, and they are no older now than when angels sang hallelujahs at their creation. Nature has her antiquities, for she has some productions which she has ceased to produce; but for her streams and her mountains, her fields and her flowers, I hope they will never be antiquated. An aged tree, especially if shivered by wind or lightning, is certainly a thing of other times. A rock rifted by earthquake—a fragment fallen at some far-distant or forgotten period from a mountain-side—a deep fissure seemingly rent by some power greater than any which nature is now exerting—may fitly be called natural antiquities. So are the mammoth's bones. They tell tales of

the planet's vigorous youth; they belong to an order of things different from the present.

But there is nothing in nature, however green and fresh, or perpetually reproduced, which may not be rendered antique by poetry and superstition. Is not the very ground of Palestine and Egypt hoary? Are not the Nile and Jordan ages upon ages older than Little Muddy River, or Great, Big, Dry River, or Philosophy, Philanthropy, and Wisdom Rivers, which unite to form Jefferson River? (It is a burning shame that those Yankees should be permitted to nickname God's glorious creatures after this fashion.) The Jesuits have done something for the Orellana; but even Mississippi (notwithstanding Mr. Law and his scheme) is yet in its minority. By the way, bubbles and stock-jobbing have nothing antique about them.

Something of this hallowed character invests every plant and animal to which a superstition has attached. The fancies of old poets; love-charms and magic incantations; the dreams of alchymy and astrology; the rites of obsolete religions; the strange fictions and unutterable compounds of the old medicine; the dark tales of philtres and secret poisons; more than all, fireside tradition have given to many an herb, and bird, and creeping thing, a stamp and odour of auld lang syne. Gems always remind me of the enchanted rings and amulets of romances, of Gyges and the Barmecides, and those marvellous crystals, in whose transparent water necromancers beheld "the face of things that is to be." The pansy

is still sacred to Oberon and Titania; the mistletoe is not of our generation; the mandrake is a fearful ghost of departed days; the toad is the most ancient of reptiles, and the raven is "a secular bird of ages." But this imputation of antiquity belongs not to every flower that has been sung in past ages. If they were celebrated merely for beauty or fragrance, or even for such fanciful associations as might occur to any poet at any time, it does not make them antique. The rose and the lily have been time immemorial the poet's themes, yet they are not antiquities: their loveliness has no more relation to one age than another. The catholic religion is an antiquity; and this makes it, with all its imperfections, a gentlemanly mode of faith. It respects other antiquities. The Puritans, on the other hand, who, not to speak it profanely, were not gentlemen, had an odd perverse antipathy to everything that reminded them of times when they were not. They would not have spared a Madonna of Raphael, and [would have] plastered a conventicle with the Venus de Medicis.

A smack of the antique is an excellent ingredient in gentility. A gentleman, to be the *beau idéal* of his order, should live in an old house, (if haunted, so much the better,) well stocked with old books and old wine, and well hung with family portraits, and choice pieces of the old masters. He should keep all his father's old servants, (provided they did not turn modern philosophers,) and an old nurse, replete with legendary lore. His old horses, when past labour, should roam at large in his park; and his super-

annuated dogs should be allowed to dose out their old age in the sun or on the hearth-rug. If an old man, his dress should be forty fashions out of date at least. At any rate, his face should have something of the cavalier cut,—a likeness to the family Vandykes; and his manners, without being absolutely antiquated, should show somewhat of an inherited courtesy. In all, he should display a consciousness, that he is to represent something historical, something that is not of to-day or yesterday,—a power derived from times of yore. How venerable is the escutcheon of an ancient family! How richly it glows in the window of their parish church! the stained light which gleams through it is reflected from distant centuries. How awful are its griffins and wiverns! How mysterious the terms of heraldry, gules, azure, or—dexter and sinister! Apply the same to the newly purchased coat of a new gentleman, and they are rank jargon, and the coat itself an unmeaning daub.

Yet antiquity is not always genteel. The Jewish nation is the greatest antiquity upon earth. It is a remnant of a dispensation that has passed away. The law and the prophets are their family history. Their rites and customs, their food, their daily life, are derived from times long anterior to all records but their own. But, alas! it is not good for nations to be antiquities. They cannot but fall to ruin; and a human ruin is not a ruined temple.

The Gypsies, as a relic of the old Nomadic life, may be regarded with somewhat similar, but less melancholy feelings. We know not that they were

ever better than they are, though certainly the tide of society is daily leaving them farther behind. In the list of retrograde nations, we may mention the Abyssinians. All their laws, customs, and forms declare that they must once have been a civilised people. At present they seem to be barbarians, with a few antique traditions of civilisation,—like Indians, armed with the weapons, and clothed in the garments of some murdered European crew.

An antiquity, in short, to conclude instead of beginning with a definition, is not that which is merely old, but that which has outlived its time,—which belongs to another state of society, another age of man or nature, than that in which it is contemplated. It must not be of the essence of universal nature, for she is ever renewing, nor of pure reason, for that is eternal. Neither must it be a mere whim, an arbitrary fancy or fashion, having no ground in either; but it must be a mode, an emanation of nature,—a form she has assumed and laid aside.

A PREFACE THAT MAY SERVE FOR ALL MODERN WORKS OF IMAGINATION.

If to be original it were necessary to be new, originality is at an end. Not only all the sense in the world is pre-occupied, but all the nonsense likewise. There is not a simile, however devoid of similitude, —a paradox, however outrageous,—a pun, how execrable soever, but may be found in works that were extant long before the oldest man living was thought of. All the originality that a modern work can possibly attain is the originality of a quilted counterpane, in which old shreds and remnants assume a novel appearance from ingenious juxtaposition. I dare say, by-the-bye, this comparison has been made use of before in some book which I never read.

It would be impossible, even for an opium-eater, to conceive a superstition which has not been the sober belief of some tribe or other; nor could the genius of absurdity, personified in the shape of a fancy dress-maker or dandy tailor, invent an absolutely new fashion.

Even if originality were possible, it would not be desirable; for it must of necessity be false. There was a time, perhaps, when golden lands and fortunate

islands were hidden in the vast ocean; but now nothing remains to be discovered but the sandy deserts of Central Africa, and the inaccessible ice-rocks of the North Pole. No doubt it would be original to discover a north-west passage; but what would it be good for?—Just nothing.

What incident, short of physical impossibility, could a novel or romance writer devise, which might not be found not only in former novels and romances, but in the annals of real life?

But is it necessary for a thought to be new, in order to be original? Is every honest man a plagiary, because a few honest men have existed in every generation since the pupilage of old Father Adam? Or am I a plagiary, in my love of venison, because old Quin declared—

> "If the Devil in Styx should in fishing delight,
> Let him bait but with venison, by —— I would bite."

In truth, every sentiment that proceeds from the heart, every thought that emanates from the individual mind, or is suggested by personal observation, is original, though, in all probability, it has been thought and felt a thousand times before. The people who are generally called originals are, for the most part, those who have the least claim to the title. They are, in nine instances out of ten, deplorably affected; and affectation is the antipodes of originality. Hypocrites are never original; and affectation is the hypocrisy of manners, as hypocrisy is the affectation of morals. Those who try to be

original never succeed. The completest originals in the world are your plain, matter-of-fact, every-day folks, that never utter a word but what they mean. There are few synonymes in any language; but there is in the English a perfect synonyme to the word *original:* it is—the scarcely less-abused word—*natural.* Many men and many writers call themselves natural, because they affect a nature different from their own. A fashion prevailed some time ago of imitating the old ballads, and talking of their delightful simplicity. True, they are delightfully simple, and so is a child of two years old; but what should we think of a man of forty, who set up for simplicity by lisping and babbling like his youngest daughter?

"Percant qui ante nos nostra dixerunt," says St. Augustine, or somebody else. So might every modern author say,—but it would be a sad loss to the world at large.

Never was there an age which strained so hard after originality as the present,—yet it is not an original age. It is indeed somewhat original, to discover that Pope and Dryden were no poets; and so it would be to demonstrate that the moon is made of green cheese. But, as for radicalism, and mechanics' institutes, and modern methodism, and modern infidelity, they are all *failures.* The two latter are as old as fanaticism, and heartless presumption; and the former were known in Rome under the tyranny of the Tribunes, and in the Netherlands, when Ghent and Brussels were what Leeds and Manchester are now.

What is called the universality of education has a tendency to drive all poetry and originality out of the world. Formerly, women and mechanics were the best company to be found. Everything they said was original—the product of their own thoughts and feelings. Now they are crammed with just enough knowledge to display the magnitude of their ignorance. Whatever they say is something out of a book. Now I hate to hear people talk out of books. I can read myself.

This is an age of books; and books, with all their merits, do not promote originality. The ideas we get from them are seldom our own. It requires as much genius to appropriate an idea as to conceive one. We now seek in books for knowledge; but there is little knowledge to be gained, except from life and observation. A man would not be very vigorous, if, instead of eating and drinking, he took a fancy to support himself by injecting ready-made chyle into his vessels.

We are anxious to provide weapons, but we neglect the hand that is to wield them. We kill the goose for the sake of her golden eggs. Knowledge is power when in the possession of a powerful mind; for with such, truths old as the creation are original: but it is no compliment to a man to be called a walking encyclopædia. Memory is at best an operative; and woe be to the state where the operatives take the lead!

Heaven forfend that I should speak this in contempt of the humble, useful members of society! On

the other hand, I have ever maintained, that "those who think" should assume no superiority over "those that toil." All that I say is, that their vocations are different. This is a levelling age. Perhaps it is well it should be so; but such is the fact. The dress of the old court could only be worn gracefully by a courtier,—a dandy shopman, with a sword tripping him up at every step, would have been detected at first sight. Tarnished gold lace, or an out-of-date periwig, would instantly expose an unqualified pretender to quality. No lady's maid, or milliner, could have walked well in a hoop—nor could the ceremonious gallantry, the courteous hauteur of the old court, be successfully imitated by exoterics. A gentleman, or a lady, can now distinguish him or herself by nothing but plain dress, plain sense, and originality. Bon ton, just now, is decidedly vulgar; so are vice and absurdity. Originality is generally agreeable. The only disagreeable original that I know is an original bad heart. Anything, not positively vicious, that belongs to the individual, is good. Even ugliness is sometimes lovely. I have known very plain women whom I should be sorry to see handsomer. No one that is acquainted with a stammering humourist, or a lisping lady, (if her lisping be original,) would wish to have them cured.

Why is nature lovely? Because she is always original. Distilled perfumes are sweeter to the voluptuous sense than natural odours; the painted cheek presents the eye with as fine a red as modesty's native blush; roses have been made by art which, at

the distance of a yard, might be mistaken for nature's own: but no one loves them; we only admire the ingenuity of the maker; and love and admiration, though near akin, are not on intimate terms. What we know well, we either love or hate; what we know not, we either admire or laugh at.

Let no man, therefore, that has a heart and can think,—that loves nature in his soul, and knows the meaning of the word *truth*, despair of being original, or envy his forefathers their thoughts, which may be his as well as their's, if he is capable of thinking them. There are some current tricks to produce an appearance of originality, which, to speak civilly, are rather shallow. Blasphemy is by no means original (I wish it were). Sedition is very common-place. The device of interlining obscenity with sentimentality is quite stale. It is not a good penance for drunkenness to indite drunken jokes when half-sober. It were well if our wits of this class would recollect, that they are not the first fools that ever existed. A more innocent artifice has been adopted by more respectable writers, who aim at originality by versifying books of travels, who think that the moon is renovated by a Turkish name, and that the rose acquires a fresh perfume when it is called *gul*. Doubtless a new imagery may be obtained by fixing the *venue* of a poem in America or India; but imagery is of little value in poetry, except as an exponent of thought or feeling. A passage which requires a note to render it intelligible is always more serviceable to book-makers than book-readers. Poets of the exotic school should remember

that Hong merchants and West India captains seldom read poetry.

A book may be perfectly original, and yet not contain a thought, simile, pun, or allusion that is new. Who cannot distinguish a man, or a book, that is talking by rote?

There is in all such talkers, and all such books, an air of studied facility that instantly betrays them. What is called a fluent man, who talks "like a prent book," in whose discourse are no verbless nominative cases, and nominative-caseless verbs, is, depend upon it, always a shallow man. Of course, I speak of those to whom the faculty of easy speaking is natural. The deepest intellects may acquire it by practice. There is ever an analogy between the state of literature and the state of society. There was an age, perhaps, when the wide earth, and he that first entered on the fair plain, or took upon himself to clear the woodland of its waste fertility, might call the spot he occupied his own. That age is past; yet every man, who has the means, may make a plot of earth his own. So it is in the world of imagination. No doubt there has been a time when the moon and the blue sky, and the rose and the lily, and the dove and the nightingale, were new in verse: there must have been a poet who first introduced them. Yet the moon shines still, the sky has not ceased to be blue; the rose and the lily are fair and sweet as ever; the dove is just as gentle and loving as when she brought the olive-leaf to the sole human family; and the nightingale sings as sweetly to us as to that

sweet-witted Persian who first called the rose her paramour. And do we, in these later days, merely inherit our love for these things, so fair and lovely? Thanks to the great men of old; we love them for their sakes, but we love them for their own too. Our affection is hereditary, but it is original also. We know not whether Pythagoras was the first or only man that ever conceived the famous forty-seventh proposition; yet who would deny to his rapturous Eureka the joy and triumph of originality?

There is one thing which I trust has been repeated from generation to generation, which is, nevertheless, a complete original, without which all originality is worse than good for nothing—an overflowing fountain of noble thoughts and kind emotions, which are its own, and none can take from it—a thing which must ever be original, for no art can copy it, and God alone can bestow it—a good heart.

LOVE-POETRY.

Love is certainly a poetical subject. All poets who deserve the name are, or have been, lovers; and a considerable portion of lovers wish to be poets. How comes it, then, that of the innumerable amatory effusions which comprise more than half the minor literature of the world, so few are even tolerable. If the lover would but express his real feelings in plain language, with such figures, and such only, as the passion spontaneously suggested, surely we should have sense at least, if not poetry. But a notion long prevailed that poetry must be something different from sense, and that love must be irrational because it is sometimes indiscreet. Love is a divinity; therefore, it must talk as unintelligibly as the Pythian Prophetess. He is a child; therefore, it is proper he should whine and babble: or, to speak less like a Pagan, it is too genteel an emotion to call anything by its proper name. Love-poets seem to have borrowed from the amorous Italians a fashion of paying their addresses in masquerade. The fair lady is changed into a nymph, a siren, a goddess, a shepherdess, or a queen. She lives upon air, like the chameleon, or on dew, like the grasshopper. Like the

bird of paradise, she disdains to touch the earth. She is not to be courted, but worshipped. She is not composed of flesh and blood, but of roses and lilies and snow. In short, she is altogether overwhelmed and mystified with the multitude of her own perfections. The adorer is Damon or Strephon; a shepherd, or a pilgrim, or a knight-errant; and his passion is a dart, a flame, a wound, a Cupid, a religion,—anything but itself.

We are afraid that the weary iteration of these extravagant common-place conundrums arises from a source very different from passionate admiration. Authors are but too apt to have a mean opinion of the female intellect. Ladies' men of the school of Will Honeycomb rarely appreciate women as they should do, and recluse students, conscious of their own deficiency in the graces which are supposed indispensable to gain the favour of the fair, endeavour to despise the sex which overawes them. Another source of this silly sameness of love-verses is the notion that a lover must compose as well as dress in the height of the fashion. Hence the endless repetition of stock phrases and similes—the impertinent witticism—the wilful exclusion of plain sense and plain English—the scented, powdered, fringed, and furbelowed coxcombry of quality love-poets.

The drawing-room style is, however, well nigh obsolete. We hear little of the Damons and Strephons, with their Phillis and Amaryllis, for all the world like the porcelain shepherds and shepherdesses that used to adorn our mantel-pieces before geology

and mineralogy became fashionable for ladies. Diana and Minerva, and Hebe and Aurora, and the rest of those folks, are left to slumber peacefully in Tooke's Pantheon, though a certain class of poets have bestowed the names of those divinities on a whimsical set of beings of their own invention.

We should not, however, censure the introduction of the Grecian deities in Greek and Roman poetry. Not only were they objects of popular belief, but distinct and glorious forms, familiar as household things to every eye and memory. Sculpture and painting had given them a real being; their names immediately suggested a fair or sublime image,—a delightful recollection of the wonders of art sanctified by something of a religious feeling that inspired them with immortal life, and invested them with imaginary beauty. Even the classic allusions of our own early writers may be defended, but on different ground. Mythologic names were not then unavoidably associated with school-boys' tasks and court or cockney poetry. They were flowers fresh from the gardens of Italy and Greece, perfumed with recollection of the olden time. They did not, indeed, suggest distinct images to ordinary readers; but, what perhaps was better, they gave a momentum to the imagination in a certain direction; they excited an indefinite expansion,—a yearning after the ideal,—a longing for beauty beyond what is seen by the eye or circumscribed by form and colour, — a passionate uncertainty.

PINS.

How many occasions of instruction do we daily omit, or pervert to the worst purposes! How seldom are we aware, that every atom of the universe is a text, and every article of our household an homily! Few out of the immense female population of these realms but in some way are beholden to pins: and yet how few, how very few, derive any advantage from them beyond a temporary concinnity of garments, the support of an apron, or the adhesion of a neckerchief: they stick them in at morning, and pull them out at night, daily, for years, without enlargement of intellect, or melioration of morals. Yet there is not a pin in a tailor's arm, not one that contributes to the annual groat of a miser, but might teach the wise of the world a lesson. Let us divide it into matter and form, and we shall perceive that it is the form alone that constitutes it a pin. Time was when it slumbered in the chaos of brazen wire, amid the multitude of concentric circles, cycles, and epicycles. Time was, too, when that wire was molten in the furnace, when the solid brass became as water, and rushed from its ore with a glowing rapidity. When this took place we know not; what strange mutations

the metals may have undergone we cannot conjecture. It may have shone on the breast of Achilles, or ejected the spirit of Hector. Who knows but it may have partaken of the sacredness of Solomon's lavers, or have gleamed destruction in the mirror of Archimedes?

From form, then, is derived disgrace or dignity; of which the poor passive matter is but the involuntary recipient; yet forms are all fleeting, changeable creatures of time and circumstance, will and fancy: there is nothing that abides but a brute inert mass, and even that has no existence at any time, but in the form which then it bears.

Just like this pin is man. Once he was, while yet he was not, even in the earth, from whence the fiery spirit which pervades all nature, and contains in itself the forms and living principles of all things, summoned him to life and consciousness. How various his subsequent fates!—how high his exaltation!—how sacred his offices!—how brilliant his genius!—how terrible his valour!—yet still the poor human animal is the same clod of earth, or the same mass of bullion, that is sown by the seeds that float in the atmosphere of circumstance, and stamped by the dies of education and example. See him in the decline, in the super-civilisation of social life. He is sunk to a pin. His sole solidity is brazen impudence. His outside mercurial glitter, a counterfeit polish, as deleterious as it is attractive; composed of changeable fashions, that glide away like quicksilver, and, like quicksilver, are excellent to denote the changes of the seasons.

Consider the head of a pin. Does it not resemble those royal personages which the English have been in the habit of importing from foreign parts to govern them? For, observe, it is no part of the pin, but super-induced upon it,—a mere exotic,—a naturalised alien; or, like the noses of Taliacotius, adopted to supply natural or contingent deficiencies. It is a common remark upon a person of moderate intellects, that he has a head, and so has a pin; but I believe it is to our national rather than our individual heads that this is meant to be applied; for what similarity can there exist between the silliest head that grows between a pair of shoulders and an adventitious nob, owing its elevation wholly to the caprice or convenience of a pin-maker? But if the public head be intended, the analogy is strong enough for a commentator on the Apocalypse. A foreign prince, by the wisdom of a British parliament, became united to the headless trunk of the nation; becomes part of us by force of time and adhesion; yea, the very part from which the rest derive honour and usefulness.

But if the head be thus dignified, shall the point want respect, without which the head were no head, and the shaft of no value, though, in relation to these noble members, it is but as the tail? Is it not the operative artificer, the pioneer to clear the way, the herald to announce, the warrior to subdue opposition? How aptly does this little javelin typify the frame of human society! What the head of a pin would be without its point, and the point without the head, that were the labourer without the ruler, or the ruler without the labourer.

There is one more resemblance I would fain suppress did not truth call for its statement. That pin may long glitter in the orderly rank of the paper, or repose in the soft security of the cushion; it may fix itself on the bosom of beauty, or support the cumbrous honours of her train; but an end is predestined to its glories, and Abasement the minor shall seize the possessions from Pride the trustee. It shall one day be broken, lost, trampled under foot, and forgotten; its slender length, which now is as straight as the arrow of Cupid, shall be as crooked as his bow; and it shall share the fate of decrepit demireps and exploded patriots.

Remember, *ye statesmen*, and learn from the pin. While it was upright as the councils of —— (no statesman that I ever heard of) it remained in office and preferment; and was not laid aside till it became sinuous as the politics of Machiavel.

BOOKS AND BANTLINGS.

It has often been observed, pathetically and satirically, that the partiality of authors for their works greatly resembles that of parents for their children. We mean to make some uncommon remarks upon this common-place position, and to establish its general truth by an induction of particulars.

First, we may notice that, in each case, the affection too often is not reciprocal. Books, indeed, if we may judge by results, are frequently the most ungrateful children in the world, exposing their parents' infirmities, "cooling their friends, heating their enemies," involving them in disgrace and beggary, not seldom bringing them to gaol or pillory; and often, ere now, to the torture, the stake, or the gallows. Some are said to have driven their authors mad; but here, it must be confessed, there has generally been an hereditary twist of insanity in the offspring. Some, like Regan and Goneril, sound high their parents' praise, and afterwards expose them to the pitiless world, and all its storms. A few, like good Cordelia, speak not of their fathers at all; and these are they that honour and protect their grey hairs.

Yet, such is the final perseverance of parental love, that no author was ever known to like his works the worse in his heart for all the calamities they had brought upon him, though many have been induced, from motives of fear or prudence, to disown them. Sometimes, too, the prolific are led, by the lucre of gain, to deck the childless with parental honours. Adopted books are as common as adopted children; many a work has been fathered falsely, many a one, in legal phrase, is *nullius filius;* and here and there it happens, that literary parents, as well as natural ones, endeavour to pass off their proper offspring for foundlings. Horace Walpole and Chatterton are cases in point.

The less a child is liked by the world, the dearer it becomes to its father and mother. Does not this hold good with regard to unpopular authors, who may be said, literally, to doat upon their productions? It is an awful thing to meet the mother of a spoiled booby, whose insolence or idleness have incurred condign punishment from master or school-fellow. We have seen writers as irrationally furious when the mooncalves of their brain have been undergoing the rod of criticism.

It is a great topic of censure with grandmothers, ladies of a certain age, and precise old bachelors, that the youth of both sexes in the rising generation are brought out too soon. Critics, ever since Horace's "nonum prematur in annum," and probably long before, have kept up the same outcry against the premature publications of authors, in as kindly a spirit, and with nearly the same effect.

Is there any anxiety greater than that of a young poet on the eve of appearing in print, when his darling effusions are to throw off their nursery-attire of manuscript, in which they were only produceable at family parties, or, at most, to a few friends, and appear in type, à-la-mode, with fashionable margins, to the expectant public? None, certainly, within our male cœlibate range of experience; but if looks, gestures, hints, expound the female heart, the anxiety of a mother at her daughter's first début in rout or assembly, is at least equal. We are afraid these parental emotions meet with little sympathy in either case. The mother may have a husband, indeed, to share, while he chides her folly; but the luckless scribbler has no partner in his. A friend, a sister, or a wife, may wish him well, but none but a poet can conceive his feelings. And poets, the more the pity, feel very little for one another. We have been often told, that none but a parent can imagine a parent's joys, or woes, or fears—most heartily we believe it; but we know, that no soul that is innocent of inkshed, can conceive the unimaginable throes, the solicitudes, the eager anticipations, the nervous tremors, the day thoughts wild as dreams, the nightly visions, vivid and continuous as wakeful life, of a fresh candidate for literary fame.

But who, in these most educated and enlightened days, is not such a candidate? Buonaparte called us a nation of shopkeepers; and it were as well if we were to remain so—but we are in imminent danger of becoming a nation of authors and orators.

For, in truth, every one who writes or speaks with design to produce *effect*, with a wish not merely to be understood, but admired, becomes *de facto* an author or an orator—a competitor for the fame of intellect. Now does not every schoolboy that contends for a prize, every 'prentice that pens a Valentine, every traveller that scrawls on an inn window, fall under this definition? Is not every advertisement a specimen of authorship, and every vestry meeting an arena of rhetoric? Can a toast be proposed at club or ordinary throughout this eloquent land, but calls forth more tropes and figures than grammarians have invented names for? Moreover, is there any essential difference between oratory and authorship? Do not both proceed from one impulse, and aim at one end? Words, uttered or written, are their common means, their common end is admiration—scribbler and spouter alike crave from their fellow-creatures a ratification of the opinion they entertain of their own powers—a sympathy with the delight they feel in displaying them.

And the gentle maiden, when, addressing her dear mother, or dear, dear governess, or dear, dear, *very* dear friend and school-fellow, she crosses and re-crosses perpendicularly and diagonally her pretty feminine phrases, till the mere act of perusing the close-woven texture of tenderness becomes a complete refutation of the vulgar sarcasms against female patience, she, too, feels the fire of literary ambition, and somewhat of a maternal yearning; she too is an authoress. She has caught the epidemic of the age

—an infection so universal, that we can scarce pick up a scrap of whitey-brown paper, a meagre collection of pot-hooks and hangers, sealed with a thimble, that is not composed in a STYLE.

Not only, indeed, will we maintain that Valentine writers, letter writers, &c., partake of the parental feelings of authorship, but that they possess them in much greater force and purity than many authors by profession, who are apt, like parents in slave-exporting countries, to consider their offspring as mere articles of traffic, and care little for them after they are sold. The love or the need of money can extinguish the natural affection even of an author for his lucubrations. The genuine literary parent desires indeed that his offspring should be dear to others as to himself. Men cannot bear an undivided love, or joy, or sorrow. But he is a very different being from the mere mercenary of the press—for he is more anxious for readers than purchasers. He is also distinguished by a longing for posthumous fame rather than temporary éclat. So do affectionate fathers pray that their posterity may survive them, and hope to live after death in their children's children.

Some writers spoil their works by over-indulgence to their whims and fancies—others by extreme severity of correction, give them a harsh, stiff, ungenial character. The analogy will easily suggest itself. One more resemblance we will mention, the most pregnant of all. Every father and mother that have many children, however impartial they may deem it their duty to show themselves, will be

better pleased with some than others. There is a pet in almost every family. So it is with the authors of many works. However well they may love them all, they will have some pet production, some favourite passage, some minion thought, some darling simile. One will prefer his first-born, another the child of his old age. Some the offspring of the hardest labour, and some the babe of easiest birth. Nor shall we be at a loss to find among these literary parental partialities a strong similitude to the affection which mothers are said to feel for weaklings and idiots.

Extrinsic circumstances, pleasant or pleasing melancholy associations—local recollections—any one of the countless chains that bind the past to the present, may determine the preference. The verse or period which has been read in mellowing tones of love by mistress or by friend, will be precious, though all the rest were scorned or forgotten. But in general the parent will prefer the child, and the writer the book, which is likest himself, which bears the strongest impress of his individuality.

We have often thought that a most entertaining and instructive article might be written on the habits, propensities, and antipathies of authors, as they are betrayed in these favourite passages. It is true they do not always praise either the things or the persons which they like best. No man is to be trusted when he is wilfully moralizing, and we are all apt to admire what we have not ourselves, unless we hope to gain admiration by despising it. Thomson, who

was a notorious slug-a-bed, is peculiarly eloquent on the subject of early rising:

> "Falsely luxurious, will not man awake,
> And springing from the bed of sloth, enjoy
> The cool, the fragrant, and the silent hour
> To meditation due, and sacred song."
> *Summer.*

Poor Steele, who, like his namesake, Richard Brinsley, was worse haunted by duns and bailiffs, than any saint in the calendar by evil spirits, writes indignantly upon the disgrace of being in debt, and solemnly on the advantages of economy. We fear he never was the better for his own doctrines; yet it is related that he composed the "Christian Hero" with a serious purpose of reforming himself. Addison, in his character of Moralist, enforces sobriety with somewhat of an ungenial strictness, yet it hath been recorded that he often proved by experiment—that good liquor will make a dumb man speak. It must be allowed, however, that the Spectator speaks with heart-felt satisfaction of his pipe, and seems to have entertained a sneaking affection for Brookes and Hellier. Otway was a great professor of royalty; yet how forced and frigid are his oblations to the throne. We may surely suspect that a writer, who sympathises so warmly with conspirators at Venice—who expounds with such experimental intelligence the very heart of treason—would have felt no small exultation at the overthrow of the order of things under which he was starving at home. Milton was a Republican—Massinger seems to have been a

Whig—naturally enough, for he was poor. Beaumont and Fletcher, one of whom was the son of a Judge, and the other of a Bishop—who were probably, in their own right, companions of courtiers, and whose short lives passed away in gay prosperity—were courtly royalists. The high-church divinity of Fletcher on the divine right and irresponsibility of kings, clearly indicates his episcopal origin, and contrasts oddly with the general laxity of his plots. Ben Jonson, so highly, and in general so justly praised, for his adherence to costume, and close observance of the peculiarities of times and countries, has committed a glaring anachronism in his Sejanus. He introduces the sentiments and reasonings of King James's court into that of Tiberius. Ben's loyalty, however, is strongly tinged with laureate-sack, though no doubt heightened by his natural aversion to the Puritans, whom it was morally impossible for any dramatic writer to love. But Otway—first among our poets, and till our own times, almost alone—was a Jacobin. If it be asked how we are authorised to predicate such a character of a writer, whose professed opinions verge to the opposite extreme—we reply, that a man's opinions are not himself. It is not in the opinions of any author, verseman or proseman, that his heart is betrayed. Would any prudent chamberlain permit the representation of "Venice Preserved" in hard times? Is it in the expression of loyal or of treasonable sentiments that Otway shines—that he appears to have written *con amore* with heartfelt honest delight? By honest delight, be it understood

it is by no means necessary to mean a delight in honesty. Hotspur speaks of "the sincerity of fear and cold heart;" and we have known people devoutly sincere in their love of roguery. For our own parts, we like a hearty self-complacent rascal of this sort infinitely better than the "hovering temporizer," who is

> "Half-honest, which is very much a knave,"

as Rochester has it.

DE OMNIBUS REBUS ET QUIBUSDAM ALIIS.

I WISH I was a Jew. Not that I envy the wealth of Mr. Rothschild, to whom Solomon, in all his glory, was but as a parish poor-box to the Catholic rent. Not that I love (more than beseems a devout and continent Christian) the black-eyed Rebeccas of Duke Street,—though I have seen looks among them that might have melted an inquisitor. I wish they would attend a little better to the cleanly precepts of the Mosaic law: they seem to think it unworthy of their sacred nation to wash in any waters but those of Siloa or Jordan. Their large gold ear-rings and brilliant eyes remind me of Virgil's obligations to Ennius. Yet it is not for their sakes that I wish myself an Israelite. No, good reader, neither avarice nor amativeness prompts this strange hankering. I envy not the Jew his bargains; I covet not his wife, nor his servant, nor his maid, nor anything that is his, except his pedigree and his *real* property in the Holy Land.

The Jew is the only gentleman. The tree of his genealogy is the oak of Mamre. His family memoirs are accounted sacred, even by his worst enemies.

He has a portion far away—in the land which, above all others, is the land of imagination, the scene of the most certain truths, and of the wildest fictions. He may, at least, feed his fancy with the product of his never-to-be-seen acres; and, though forbidden to possess a single foot of ground, may rank himself with the landed aristocracy.

A strange passion possessed the European nations, of deriving their origin from the thrice-beaten Trojans. Even the Greeks caught the infection. So enamoured are mankind of a dark antiquity—so averse to consider themselves the creature of a day—that, not content with the hope of a future immortality, they would fain extend their existence through the dusk backward and abysm of Time, and claim a share in the very calamities of past generations. How great then the prerogative of the Jew, whose nation is his own domestic kindred; who needs not to seek his original amid the dust of forgetfulness, and the limitless expanse of undated tradition, but finds it recorded in the Book that teaches to live and to die!

I am not ungrateful for the privilege of being an Englishman; but an Englishman, of all nations, has the least ground for national family pride. For my part, I know not whether my stock be Celtic or Teutonic, Saxon, Dane, or Norman. For land—I cannot tell whether any of my ancestors ever owned or claimed an acre. It were a pleasant thing could I say of one green field, one sunny-sided hill—this was my forefathers' property, even though they had been

dispossessed by the followers of Hengist and Horsa. It is certain that I had ancestors even in the days of Cæsar—Did my great-grandsire oppose his naked breast to the invader, or slept he in the depth of German forests, or chased the wild deer in the pine woods of Scandinavia?

I will, however, assume that my forefathers were Aboriginal Britons; perhaps the last remnant of the rude giant race whom the Trojan brute expelled—descended either of Hercules Lybicus or Albion Museoticus; or, as Marianus the monk, John Rous, David Pencaim, and William Caxton affirm, from Albina, the king of Syria's daughter, and her thirty sisters, who, having murdered their husbands, were compelled to put to sea without men, oars, or tackle, and, by course of the waves and winds, were driven ashore on this fair island, where, from the embraces of demons, they bore a giant progeny. Such a pedigree is surely better than none; especially as it makes me, by right of pre-occupation, hereditary and legitimate landlord of every rood of British earth, from John o'Groat's house to the Land's End. 'Tis pleasant to think so; though nothing but an Agrarian law is likely to put me in actual possession of so much as a handful of sand.

Concerning my ancestors, the Aboriginal Britons, it is to be regretted that we are in a very unsatisfactory state of ignorance. What we learn from ancient writers is little; and what tradition and Welsh manuscripts add thereto, at best uncertain. It is a heavy offence of the Roman conquerors that

they inform us so scantily about the nations they conquered and governed. The most of the little we do know is derived from mere compilers, such as Strabo, Pliny, and Solinus, men of much credulity, trusting much to their ears, and little to their eyes; and, I doubt not, often wilfully hoaxed by fools who despised their laudable curiosity. Such tricks were put upon honest Goldsmith; and the classical taste in jokes was as little refined, and as unscrupulous, as that of any practical wit of these degenerate days.

The Roman state does not seem to have published many books by authority, which is the less to be lamented, as books published by authority seldom convey any information but what can be expressed in figures—and, even in matters purely statistic, labour under the suspicion of politic colouring. But is it not wonderful that few or none of the Roman officers, often men of elegant acquirement, should have left journals, observations, or minutes, on the countries where they were stationed—that there scarce remains the name of a traveller for knowledge? The few extant diaries are merely military. The Romans cultivated no acquaintance with the language, habits, or superstitions of the subjected tribes. The invaluable treatise of Tacitus, *De Moribus Germanorum*, is as unique as it is excellent; and even that is the work of a senator, and must have been compiled from the reports of others. Was this arrogant people above knowing how their vassals lived? Did they think it derogatory to study the jargon of barbarians, as some wiseacres in the present enlightened age would think

it a woful letting-down not to be ignorant of the countrified talk of their poor neighbours? Or was it not rather a maxim of their state-craft to abolish the remembrance of all that had been previous to their own domination, as the speediest means of Romanising the speech, the manners, the very heart of the empire? Both these causes may have contributed to the effect; but other, and yet more frivolous prejudices were concurrent. With a few, and but a few, honourable exceptions, (among which Varro and the elder Pliny stand conspicuous,) the Latin writers took little pains to impart information, for which the bulk of their readers would not have thanked them. Philosophy, science, history, whatever the theme, the work was little more than a display of rhetoric. The sense, the matter conveyed, was hardly more regarded than the words of an opera. An effeminate delicacy of ear, similar to that which influences novelists in naming their heroines, excluded from the fashionable literature all knowledge that would not glide into well-sounding words and polished periods, lusciously smooth, or poignantly stimulant. The artificial rhetoric of the latter Romans did more to cramp and enervate the human mind, to prevent the increase and diffusion of real learning, than all the subtle distinctions and hair-splitting casuistry of the long-neglected and ignorantly reviled schoolmen. Logic has borne the blame of her showy cousin's misdemeanours. It is doubtful whether even the Goths and Vandals destroyed much living knowledge, when there was so little for them to destroy. Some good

books perhaps perished in the flames of war; some the monks superscribed with legends and homilies; and some the Popes and prelates devoted to Vulcan, anticipating the spirit of the Vice Society, and wisely considering a good fire — before the invention of printing — more efficacious than an *index expurgatorius*, a Chancellor's injunction, or a libel law. Yet it is not improbable that this narrow piety saved more than it caused to perish; since, in every age, what was prohibited would be eagerly retained, and avarice would carefully preserve volumes, for which a high price might be extorted from curiosity. The current literature of the empire was indeed doomed to just oblivion, by its own exceeding great worthlessness; for it is a vain hope that fine literature can long survive the austerer studies. The writer or the age that aim exclusively at elegance or effect, will be sure to miss the scope of their pitiful ambition—as the woman, who sacrifices her health to her beauty, will soon lose both. That the unmanly taste fostered by the precepts and exhibitions of the rhetors, impaired oratory, and almost murdered poetry, we have abundant and indignant testimony: could any testimony be needful, where every remaining fragment testifies against itself. It is more to our purpose to remark, how much it must have tended to check the spirit of research, and the importation of knowledge from the remoter provinces. Words and names that would have made Quintilian stare and gasp, could not grow sleek to the sensitive ears of an audience accustomed to listen to little else than sonorous

flattery or piquant invective. With the shape and hue of foreign men and animals, the very mob of Rome must have been familiar, from the triumphal processions and gladiatorial games: and all classes were too vicious and indolent to seek for more information than entered, uninvited, at their eyes. The lingo of the barbarian was, no doubt, often enough the subject of stage mimicry, to the great edification of the *useful classes;* but there were no linguists among the literati, no curious inquirers after strange varieties of human life. Commerce, which has enlarged our knowledge no less than our wealth, was never honourable at Rome. It was the expensive slave of luxury, cherished by the vain, the idle, the effeminate; but despised by the great, censured by the moralist, and discouraged by the statesman. Our merchants and sailors, our captains and lieutenants, our very mechanics, have thrown more light on man and nature, than all the philosophers, the orators, the high-bred scholars of the Eternal City.

Perhaps Cæsar may be called an exception. His Commentaries are part of *my* family history. The information he affords is, indeed, scanty; but our family gave him little time to look about him. Proud as I justly am of my progenitors, and especially of the diabolical cross in our blood, I cannot find that Cæsar "whispers he was beat." It is certain that we were beat at last; and surely a beating from Julius is as honourable as from any of his successors. Yet some writers have contended this point, as if at this day it really concerned the glory of England.

Every boy and girl have read of the woad-stained bodies and tatooed skins of the long-haired progenitors of the Ap-Rices and Cadwalladers. But authors differ as to the important question, Whether beauty or terror was the object of this barbaric finery? What a sensation would such a costume produce at a fancy-ball! A dance of ancient Britons, habited, or rather unhabited, in antique uniform, would secure the success of a melo-drame—and, under the rose, I intend to try it myself in a grand spectacle, which I shall acknowledge when it has run thirty nights. One thing I will maintain, that this painted and sculptured nudity was neither more indecorous nor less becoming, than fifty fashions of later date. Towards the end of the fifteenth and commencement of the sixteenth century, the dress of our beaux was not only insufficient for the ends of clothing, but furnished with appendages which cannot be named, much less described, without gross indelicacy. The Callipygian devices of our fair ones have not escaped severe animadversion; and the ladies seem but lately to have discovered the just medium between too much and too little covering. Let it not be said, that these matters are too light for serious criticism, seeing that more than one Father has shown a most intimate acquaintance with the most sacred arcana of the toilet. Saints have declaimed against head-gear—the martyred Latimer preached upon caps and bonnets; and the pious Baxter wrote a treatise on the "Unloveliness of Love Locks." As for the question of taste, symmetry, and the beau ideal, were not the immeasurable trunk-breeches of

the cavaliers, often containing stuff enough for the poor of a parish—the various aggregations of false hair known under the name of periwigs—the deep cuffs, long-flapped waistcoats, and other voluminous absurdities of the old court, not to mention the pointed shoes buckled to the knee, which were restrained by statute in the reign of Richard II.—the stays and pillories of dandyism—and a hundred like monstrosities of mode, as irreconcilable with the καλον as the serpents, ravenous birds, and ill-shaped fishes, which constituted the regimentals of a Silurian or Brigantine warrior? The Lady Britons, *blues* as they were, observed a distinction, which I would gladly see enforced among their lovely posterity. The skins of the matrons were embroidered with figures appropriate to the dignity of wives and mothers,—such as dragons, lions, suns, moons, and stars; while the pretty persons of the young virgins were garnished all over with the effigies of fair herbs and flowers, which (as a quaint old historian saith) could not but yield, though a strange, yet no unpleasing aspect. Now, this distinction showed good taste and good feeling. It is a dire perplexity in modern times, that you cannot learn, without asking impertinent questions, whether any female you chance to meet in stage-coach or steam-packet is maid, wife, or widow,—and a scandal to our manners, that a woman who is the mother of children, may dress herself as airily, as temptingly, as a miss that has to look out for a husband. Now, though I am, by predestination and election, fore-ordained to a final perseverance in

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celibacy, I think a wife and mother the most venerable thing on earth, and in consequence, bound, above every creature, to venerate herself. If we should be offended to see an archdeacon in the costume of a huntsman, or a parish priest in the undress of a hussar, much more justly may we censure any incongruous levity in a female, whom the matrimonial and maternal character sets far above the sanctity of bishop, priest, or deacon.

Yet such is my compassion for the very frailties of the sex, that I would not, at least for a first offence, refuse the virgin livery to such unfortunates as had loved not wisely, but too well. How the Britons acted in these cases, we are not informed; but their morals do not seem to have been very austere.

Their scarifying or tatooing seems to have been a very painful operation. We might be puzzled to account for such fortitude in the service of vanity, which nevertheless lacks not its parallel in the annals of civilised fashion. Men, even men who in passive endurance fall far short of their sisters, have been known to sleep or lie awake with a plate of lead on their foreheads, lest the lines thereon might slander them with thinking. The tortures which many of both sexes have undergone for the removal of bodily defects, no way inconvenient, but only unsightly—might do honour to an inquisitor. I read not long since of an heroic dandy, who permitted his misshapen leg-bone to be filed and scraped by an ignorant quack, till his life was in imminent danger. Who does not know that the order of Jesuits owes

its foundation (under Satan) to the personal vanity of Ignatius Loyola, and his ambition to be like the Homeric warriors—*bene ocreatus?* Had loose boots, or cossack trowsers, been the fashion, Loyola might have died without the odour of sanctity—and the name of Jesuit had never been heard for reproach or for praise. To such slight occasions are mighty agencies indebted for their first motion. The process of putting a dandy shoe upon the foot of a gallant in the age of Loyola, is detailed in a very curious extract among the notes to Southey's tale of Paraguay, a book well worth purchasing, were it for the notes alone. This shin-galling mode seems to have extended to England,—for it is mentioned among the accomplishments of Poins, that he wears his boot very smooth, like the sign of the leg. Did it suggest to the facetious Lauderdale and his colleagues in the council of state, the punishment of the boot, inflicted on the poor wandering Covenanters?

Vanity, it seems, will make man endure almost as much as zeal. After such instances of self-torments, it may appear like an anti-climax to allude to the tight-lacing of our grandmothers,—the diet and medicines taken to preserve the delicacy of complexion—the painful twisting of the hair—"the paper-durance and double loads of lead," which tender virgins yet endure—the headache which must have assailed the "towered Cybeles" of the last century beneath their tiers of curls and bushels of powder—the constrained attitudes—the sticks and back-boards of modern boarding-schools—or the numberless

secrets never divulged to man, by which females in every age, and of every age, purchase imaginary comeliness at the expense of real comfort.

Were it not unfashionable to moralise, I might here remark, how the very follies and fopperies of mankind bear witness to the existence of a nobler immaterial principle, still urging them to treat their bodies as their slaves, their property, and not their very selves. For it is not to be forgotten, that the vanity of person, the pride of fashion, the desire of admiration, the dread of singularity, or whatever else may have prompted these practices, however reprehensible in its excess, is still an intellectual, not a sensual, principle. The Hindoo who reclines upon a couch of spikes; the nun who wears sackcloth, and feeds on offals that famine might cast the gorge at; the poor enthusiast that spent his life on a pillar, or she who gives her tawny skin to be needled and flowered as if it were an insensible garment; each and all display a spirit that is stronger than sense—a power that laughs at pain—a soul that tyrannises over the flesh, as if it were something alien and of another nature. Nor do I doubt that man—ay, and soft trembling woman also—may exult in agony, and rejoice with the joy of victory upon the rack. Do we not see the vilest malefactors jest with the gallows, and make merry with the lash? Mountebanks and bedlamites would gash themselves for gain: drunkards oft-times for mere sport or bravado. What toil, what privation, are not men daily imposing upon themselves for a trifling wager, and the praise of fools? Need

we refer to the gladiators of old—poor slaves, whom courage, greater than all the boasted achievements of Curii and Dentati, could not rescue from contempt; who (to use the words of the great Jeremy), "when they were exposed naked to each other's short swords, and were to cut each other's souls away in portions of flesh, as if their forms had been as divisible as the life of worms,—they did not sigh or groan: it was a shame to decline the blow, but according to the just measures of art. The women that saw the wound shriek out; and he that receives it holds his peace. He did not only stand bravely, but will also fall so; and when he was down, scorned to shrink his head, when the insolent conqueror came to lift it from his shoulders: and yet this man, in his first design, aimed only at liberty and the reputation of a good fencer; and when he sank down, he saw he could only receive the honour of a brave man,—the noise whereof he shall never hear, when his ashes are crammed into his narrow urn."—*Holy Dying*, ch. iii. sect. 4. And can virtue be weaker than vanity? Shall he, "whom the truth makes free," be more coward than a stage-playing slave? Shall the hope of immortality in heaven—the applause of God and angels—the beauty of holiness—shall these less avail to hearten the children of light, than the clamour of a theatre, or the shout of a rabble, or the envy of a ball-room,—the poor praise of a delicate hue and slender form, or the devilish renown of impenitent villainy, which have fortified the nerves of the frailest, or the worst of worldlings—of fantastic females, of

half-brutified savages, of miserable buffoons, and hardened ruffians at the gibbet?

The power of supporting pain, and defying death, is no virtue, at least it is no proof (τεκμηριον) of righteousness; nor is its exercise a sure evidence of a good cause, or even of sincerity in error. It is a gift, not a grace—a natural gift—a faculty innate—and only wanting in a few constitutionally defective, or unnerved by sloth and luxury. The love of life and ease are indeed strong in every breast, and will ever prevail, where not duly counter-balanced. Wise and thoughtful men often seem to overvalue their life and limbs, because they will not risk them for trivial gains. Others, endowed with fine faculties, but lacking the principle that should direct their use, turn cowards—sensualists, from a pride of superior sense. They are wise enough to despise the ordinary prizes of human ambition; but they have not the light which points to an incorruptible crown. Thus, from mere contempt of others, they degrade themselves. Their question is still, What is there worth fighting or suffering for? Their shrewd wits tell them, nothing on earth; and so far they are right: but they are lamentably blind to the great ends for which the ability to dare and to suffer were bestowed.

> "'Tis by comparison—an easy task
> Earth to despise—but to converse with Heaven
> That is not easy."

Falstaff is a coward of this class. But few men of pleasure have fortitude enough to profess themselves cowards. There was sense in Rochester's observa-

tion, that all men would be cowards if they dare. Of men such as he conversed with, it may be almost true, for valour in a voluptuary is irrational. Again, strong imagination, operating on disordered nerves, makes some fancy themselves cowards, who, when called to the test, may perhaps prove heroes; for

> "The sense of death is most in apprehension—
> And the poor beetle that we tread upon
> In corporal sufferance feels a pang as great
> As when a giant dies———"

A profound sentence, which has been strangely perverted into a common-place precept of humanity to beetles,—while its real intention is to represent the nothingness of bodily pains, which, after all, are no greater in a giant (I hope not in my gigantic progenitors) than in an insect. The fact I think extremely dubious. No animal seems capable of sufferings so exquisite as man, to say nothing of the aggravation each moment's pain receives from the prospect of a painful succession. Most men are naturally brave—all men are, in some cases, cowardly—all are timid where they expect to be worsted. An individual, if not resolved to die, must always be a coward against a multitude—a multitude, even of the bravest nation, turn tail before a few disciplined soldiers. Women are generally cowards in action, unless some commanding duty give them strength, because the consciousness of a feeble frame makes victory desperate; while, in passive endurance, they often far surpass the braggarts of war—because reason informs them, that patience is stronger than all extremities. Many

a stout martyr might have proved a craven soldier; for my own part, I could look more steadfastly on the executioner's axe than the enemy's bayonet. Even animals that are most fearful of every other species, will fight desperately against their own kind, and the Oriental nations, who are so quickly put to rout by European troops, persevere, with mad constancy, in their domestic combats.

The strength of will, in suffering, is secure of victory—but action is obliged to borrow hope of contingency; and let a man be never so stout in purpose, he knows not but another as stout may be stronger-limbed, or better-weaponed, or more cunning in fence, or higher in the favour of Destiny; and he, whom certain death could not subdue, is oft-times vanquished by the possibility of defeat. Take a wide survey of mortal humours, and we shall conclude, that no man is absolutely brave or coward—that the weakness of nature is never so far expelled but it will reign in some part—nor the self-assistive power of will ever so debilitated, but it will make itself known in some instance. It was a vain boast of the Stoics, that pain can be indifferent. We may glory in it—and glory is delightful—but that very glory proves that it is not indifferent. Hence, few are found to bear little pains easily in tolerance whereof there is no glory.

Pains of all sorts are intolerable, when they make us conscious of weakness. "To be weak is miserable." Power—the power of will felt and manifested—is the proper joy of man, as he is *man*, neither

exalted above, nor sunk below, his proper nature. If pain, peril, or the pangs of death, bring this power into distinct consciousness,—then may pain, peril, death, become things of choice and pride.

The contempt of death among the northern nations was such as to appear wonderful, even to the Greeks and Romans, who, with all their valour, looked with melancholy uncertainty on "the undiscovered country." Homer's bravest heroes cling to life with almost effeminate fondness. Achilles moralises on his brief allotted space more pathetically than heroically. How heavily the fear of something after death weighed on the Gentile spirit, may be inferred from the extravagant admiration of the Epicureans for their founder, who had lulled them with the horrid hope of annihilation. The Stoics inculcated an indifference to life; but this was the dogma of a sect, not the spirit of a people. Death in the field was, indeed, preferred to flight and shame; but to esteem it as the one honourable conclusion of a warrior's glories, to look on natural dissolution as a calamity or disgrace, is a height of barbaric heroism "beyond all Greek—beyond all Roman fame."

Death can never be indifferent till man is assured, which none was ever yet, that, with his breath, his being passes into nothing. Whether his hopes and fears steer by the chart and compass of a formal creed, or drift along the shoreless sea of faithless conjecture, a possible eternity of bliss or bale can never be indifferent. The idea of extinction is not terrible, simply because man cannot form such an

idea at all. Let him try as long as he will,—let him negative every conceived and conceivable form of future existence!—he is as far as ever from having exhausted the infinitude of possibility. Imagination will continually produce the line of consciousness through limitless darkness. Many are the devices of fancy to relieve the soul from the dead weight of unideal nothing. Some crave a senseless duration in dry bones, or sepulchral ashes, or ghastly mummies; or, rather than not to be, would dwell in the cold obstruction of the grave, or the damp hollow solitude of the charnel-house. Some choose a life in other's breath, an everlasting fame, and listen delighted to the imaginary voice of unborn ages. Some secure a permanence in their works, their country, their posterity; and yet, neither the protracted dissolution of the carcase, nor the ceaseless tradition of renown, nor a line of progeny stretched to the crack of doom, can add an instant to the brief existence of the conscious Being. Our fathers held a more palpable phantom—a dream of grosser substance —that the soul, the self, the personal identity, only shifted its tenement, and subsisted by perpetual change.

"Et vos barbaricos ritus, moremque sinistrum
Sacrorum, Druidæ, positis repetistis ab armis.
Solis nosse Deos et cœli numina vobis,
Aut solis nescire, datum: nemora alta remoti
Incolitis luci; vobis auctoribus umbræ
Non tacitas Erebi sedes, Ditisque profundi
Pallida regna petunt; regit idem spiritus artus
Orbe alio; longæ (canitis si cognita) vitæ
Mors media est. Certe populi, quos despicit Arctos,

Felices errore suo, quos, ille timorum
Maximus, haud urget, Leti metus. Inde ruendi
In ferrum mens prona viris, animæque capaces
Mortis; et ignavum redituræ parcere vitæ."
Lucan, B. 1.

It is not strictly philosophical, however, to account for the national temperament by the national creed, unless that creed be really the revealed truth. It is putting an effect for a cause. We cannot suppose that the Goths became a hunting, warlike, and drunken people, because they imagined their beatitude hereafter to consist in chasing an everlastingly revivified boar, and drinking ale, in the Hall of Odin, out of the skulls of their enemies. No; they copied a heaven from their earthly pursuits and desires. The paradise of human inventions is never more than an imaginary eternity of unalloyed human pleasures, varied according to the taste of the inventor. Virgil's Elysium is filled with warriors, poets, and lawgivers, —each reacting, in glorified semblance, their old parts beneath that purer sky. Plato's conceptions of a future state manifestly emanated from that visionary ambition of intellect—those yearning aspirations after a closer intuition of the ideal Good and Beautiful, that our compound being can enjoy,—which illuminated and sublimed his mighty genius to the very verge of inspiration. Thus, the philosopher's Elysium is speculative—the politician's practical—the labourer looks for rest—the injured for vengeance —the prisoner for freedom. The Goth transferred his drinking bout, the Mahometan his harem, to the skies. Thus each and all build up a Heaven with

the shadows of carnal affections, or the brighter effulgence of self-pleasing thought. A period comes, when some wily politician, or more vivid dreamer, substantiates the dim surmises of the longing soul into a scheme of national belief, and asserts imperatively, that the forms indistinctly beheld in the magic mirror have a correspondent reality in time and place—an *objective* existence. The fleeting vapours of passionate imagination are condensed, and, as it were, precipitated. They become a power separate from the mind —controlling the will, and modifying the total nature. Whatever of permanent and positive is infused into human sentiments, is derived from religion; whose office is to establish a super-sensual world, as real, and more permanent, than the world of sense.

SHAKSPEARE A TORY AND A GENTLEMAN.

SHAKSPEARE was a Tory. Not that he had place or pension—(I am afraid, had he possessed either, he would not have written or blotted a line)—not that he had a great stake in the country, or was particularly interested in "vested interests"—not that he was a fellow with an "epileptic visage," a "superserviceable knave," a "coward in soul," that hated liberty because he was morally incapable of enjoying it;—neither these nor any other of the despicable reasons which induce so many miserables to call themselves Tories, had, nor could have, any influence over a mind like "the gentle Willy's."* Yet it cannot be doubted

* *Gentle Willy.* The following lines, describing the irreverent familiarity with which the baptismal appellatives of Shakspeare's contemporaries were "curtailed of their fair proportion," occur where we scarcely should have looked for them—in Heywood's "Hierarchie of Angels." The good old man has contrived to introduce the poets among the dominations.

> "Greene, who had in both Academies ta'en
> Degree of master, yet could never gain
> To be called more than Robin, who, had he
> Profess'd aught save the Muse, served, and been free
> After a seven years' 'prenticeship, might have
> (With credit too) gone Robert to his grave.
> Marlow, renown'd for his rare art and wit,
> Could ne'er attain beyond the name of Kit;
> Although his Hero and Leander did
> Merit addition rather. Famous Kid

that he was a Tory—as kindly, as sincerely, as decisively, as Christopher North himself. It would be no difficult matter to prove this by quotations from his dramas, if sentiments uttered by dramatic characters could be fairly imputed to a dramatic poet; but, in truth, Shakspeare's characters are never tasked to utter his private opinions. His *dramatis personæ* are *bonâ fide* persons—not speaking masks. He used not the privilege of the stage to catch the popular sympathies for his own peculiar likes or dislikes.

It is not by multiplying citations, (an easy device to

> Was called but Tom. Tom Watson, though he wrote
> Able to make Apollo's self to dote
> Upon his muse, for all that he could strive,
> Yet never could to his full name arrive.
> Tom Nash (in his time of no small esteem)
> Could not a second syllable redeem.
> Excellent Beaumont, in the foremost rank
> Of rarest wits, was never more than Frank.
> Mellifluous Shakspeare, whose enchanting quill
> Commanded mirth or passion, was but Will;
> And famous Jonson, though his learned pen
> Be dipp'd in Castaly, is still but Ben.
> Fletcher and Webster, of that learned pack
> None of the mean'st, yet neither was but Jack.
> Decker 's but Tom, nor May, nor Middleton,
> And he 's now but Jack Ford, that once were John."

Heywood has been called a Prose Shakspeare for his dramas, which are, indeed, touching pictures of plain, homely, fireside feelings, that make us more intimately acquainted with the middle life and practical morals of our ancestors, than the more intellectual productions of his compeers can possibly do. I am afraid his "Hierarchie of Angels" will scarce entitle him to be called a Prose Milton; yet it is sufficiently curious to merit preservation, not only for the number of mysterious dogmata, strange tales, and stranger comments which it contains, but for the grave simplicity, the matter-of-fact palpability of faith, which it discloses. Heywood treats of thrones, virtues, principalities, and powers, as if their rank and precedence were as well known and as regularly marshalled as that of dukes, marquisses, city knights, and country squires at a coronation. He gravely settles the month of the year, and day of the month, on which the Creation was begun and finished, and determines how long Satan and the rest of the heavenly minority remained in administration.

fill a sheet, and shame one's own invention,) but by a comprehensive view of the informing spirit, the final scope and tendency of his works, that we can ascertain the actual direction of his mind. Now it will be granted on all hands, that his works prove him to have been a thorough Gentleman, and profoundly acquainted with Human Nature—*ergo* with the British Constitution; and from these premises all Tories will conclude that he must have been a Tory—and whom else should one dream of convincing?

First, He was a Gentleman—a term very vaguely applied and indistinctly understood. There are Gentlemen by birth, Gentlemen by education, Gentlemen's Gentlemen, Gentlemen of the Press, Gentlemen Pensioners, Gentlemen whom nobody thinks it worth while to call otherwise, *Honourable* Gentlemen, Walking Gentlemen of strolling companies, Light-fingered Gentlemen, &c. &c., very respectable Gentlemen, and God Almighty's Gentlemen. I purpose to dilate only on the two last varieties.

Among the numerous tribes of Gentlemen that are not Gentlemen, ἐλεύθεροι ἀνελεύθεροι, the *very respectable* Gentleman unquestionably holds the most respectable place. He is, indeed he must be, a very creditable, responsible, worthy, good sort of a man. He can hear the Decalogue and feel no self-reproach. He does not suspect the clergyman of personal applications at the mention of "all other deadly sin." He is perfectly admissible to the best tables. He offends against no formal law of honour. He conforms scrupulously to the ritual of etiquette. His

speech and demeanour smack not of school or 'Change; for aught that we can tell, he is perfectly gentleman-*like;* and yet he is not a Gentleman. He might fill a pulpit respectably, take the chair whenever it was vacant, adorn the bar, the bench, the senate, or the throne; and yet he is no Gentleman. The fault is not in himself, nor in his pedigree, nor in his understanding, nor in his breeding, nor in his politics, nor in his religion, but in his nature. He may be a ministerialist, a royalist, a loyalist, a constitutionalist, a church and king man, a Pittite, an Orangeman, an ultra—still he is not half a Tory, and no corpuscle of a Gentleman. It is not a choice assortment of loyal toasts and sentiments, a quotidian ague of loyal apprehensions, a paternal tenderness for the public credit, a superstitious horror of innovation, a sneer at the "march of intellect," a signature to a "hole and corner" petition—far less brutality, bigotry, or contempt of any living creature—that can make a real Tory; neither can a solvent purse, a clear reputation, and a competent drilling in the discipline of polished life, accomplish a real Gentleman.

Your very respectable *gentlemanly* man succeeds very well so long as he is quite correct and well with the world—so long as he preserves his gravity, keeps perfectly sober, out of love, and out of debt. But a sudden spring of laughter, a drappie in his ee, a touch in the heart or on the shoulder, dissolves the illusion at once, and leaves him worse than nothing—for he is too like a Gentleman to appear well in any other capacity. He should never receive or confer a kind

ness—for he lacks alike the dignity of gratitude and the grace of generosity. He should converse little with inferiors or superiors, for he knows not the mean betwixt an incommunicable distance and an infectious familiarity. He should not pay compliments to the ladies, much less pretend to be satirical on the sex; and should utterly abjure waltzing; indeed, he ought not to dance at all—for if he dances well, he looks like a parish-clerk transmogrified into a dancing-master; and if he dances badly, he puts out his partner, and tires her with apologies, and looks so ludicrously serious, so elaborately easy, and so pitiably gay, so very like bad prose staggering into worse metre, that one cannot find in one's heart to laugh at him. It is a high reach of gentility to do any thing ill with a grace; and no Gentleman does any thing *too* well. He may be allowed to ride for health or convenience; but then he must keep the broad highway,—from which he ought on no concernment to diverge,—not begrudge a penny to the ragged children at the gates, confine himself strictly to the prose department of the equestrian art, sit solidly on his saddle, choose a staid, sober, elderly pad, never think of passing for a cavalry officer, and try no fancies, or I will not answer for the consequences. If he has not a firm seat, let him walk, or hire a chaise. We have all heard of horse-laughs; but a horse-sneer to a dismounted cavalier—*Experto credo.*

Of course he must never romp, play at blindman's-buff, or hunt-the-slipper, snatch kisses from the girls at forfeits, make bad puns, (or good ones either, for a

professional punster is *low company* for Dusty Bob, and whatever your Respectable does, has the profes sional drag with it,) spout Romeo, fall on his knee, (except when he says his prayers,) black his face with a cork, or tell incomprehensible lies, to arch the finely-pencilled brows and expand the full welkin eyes of wondering maidens. He should be cautious how he trusts the frail bark of his pretensions to the gusty breeze of laughter, or the shallow flood of tears. Tears seldom become a man, unless they come un-bidden strangers to his eyes. A full-grown blubberer, with great greenish-grey goggles, swimming in his own pathos, like half-cold calf's-foot jelly, soaked in his drizzling tenderness for his own dear self, makes one ashamed of humanity. But the Respectable is seldom lachrymose; his most ambitious sorrow seldom reaches higher than his jaws, which become unusually flaccid, and give passage, with a lamentable droop of the lower mandible, to a few interjections, not quite matured to oaths, snuffled out in a tone compounded of groan, grunt, whiffle, and grumble. Neither is he often risible, unless he be a young parson, who thinks it necessary to wear a never-ending still-beginning smile. But if once the *vis inertiæ* be overcome, happy are they who were born where nerves are unknown. The winding-up of a crazy church-clock, the hysterics of a "mastif bitch," the lamentations of a patient in hydrophobia, the Christmas psalmody of a coughing congregation—what are they to

> "The long dry sea-saw of his horrible bray!"

I am far from agreeing with certain pious Fathers.

who attributed all extempore laughing to the agency of evil spirits—neither do I give credit to those fanciful old Zoologists, who speak of the "laughing hyena." I am even sceptical as to the marvellous properties ascribed to the Sardinian herb, though the story, and the metaphor borrowed from it, are as old as the Odyssey. I do not, therefore, ascribe this monstrous cachinnation, of which we treat, either to demoniacal possession, or to force of simples—nor do I call it bestial; only it is vastly disagreeable. It is nothing like that good honest confiding guffaw, which warms the heart if it grate upon the ear; and if it be not very genteel, is as good, or better. It is not morally offensive, like the sneer of an apathetic coxcomb, or the hard, coarse, overbearing burst of a bully. It is something less idiotic than a snigger, heartier than a titter, manlier than a simper, and far honester than a *glaivering smile*, which last Fielding, no bad judge of such matters, pronounces to be an infallible sign of a rogue. But it is a mere mechanical convulsion of leathern lungs, uninformed by imagination or feeling. It has a base-metal clink with it, which sadly belies the exterior plating of gentility.

In one sentence, the equivocal Gentleman must always keep his dignity, for his dignity will not keep him. We have no objection to meet him at a dress party, or at the quarter sessions, nor to read his articles in the Edinburgh, the Quarterly, or the British Critic; but we request not his contributions for Maga, nor will Mr. North send him a general invitation to the Noctes.

Now, a God Almighty's Gentleman may do just as he pleases, subject to no restrictions but those of honour, virtue, and religion. Wherever nature leads, let him follow, fearless and free. He needs not to freeze his features in unmeaning gravity, or bring on wrinkles with laborious mirth. His home is everywhere; "a pilgrim bold in nature's care," he may mingle unblamed in the frolics of children, and the holiday sports of rustics; he may join in the half-suppressed, and still ebullient laughter of misses in their teens—listen *perdu* to their audible whispers—filch their secrets—cheat at the loo table—draw characters on Twelfth Night—make young hearts merry with old-world follies—grace the dance, or turn it to confusion—sing to any tune or none—utter paradoxes like a metaphysician, and pun as vilely as a Cabalistic divine; or, if the fit be on him, he may be absent, mute, meditative, in the midst of mirth. "Melancholy and gentlemanlike," was an old association, nor is its meaning antiquated yet. But then, gentlemanlike melancholy is never obtrusive—gentlemanly silence does not put a stop to conversation. In his stiller moods, the Gentleman's presence is scarce marked, or only felt as the murmuring of a distant stream, whereof we are only conscious by the calm feeling with which it tempers gaiety.

The Gentleman may write what he will,—tragedy, comedy, farce, satire, panegyric, amatory sonnets, or laureate odes. It is not necessary that he should write all or any of these styles well. He may, if he chooses, write very badly; we will not promise not to

laugh at him,—but we shall never blush for him. His distinguishing excellence is generally in satire and panegyric,—for his sarcasms mangle not; if they wound, it is not mortally: his flattery is a perfume light as air: he may be of any trade or profession,—for his occupation never imbues his soul; it is an instrument which he uses,—no part of himself. It is needless to say that true Gentility cannot exist in a mean, a gross, or a malignant nature. But it is a good angel that is very loth to quit its charge. Hard it were to determine through what oblique, what dark and miry paths the gentle spirit will accompany an erring and bewildered favourite. There are some natures so intrinsically noble, so perseveringly pure and beautiful, that even their own act and will cannot utterly degrade or defile them. They cannot be "less than archangels ruined." But these are painful spectacles in their penal humiliation to be viewed with other thoughts, than such as rise at sight of a "garden flower run wild."

So little is recorded of Shakspeare's personal history, and so much of that little is of dubious credit, (for relics and anecdotes illustrate the general principle, that demand creates supply, and fraud is always at hand to cater for curiosity,) that it may seem presumptuous to say more of him, than his writings, the bright and express image of his genius, will vouch for. Now, of all writers (except Homer), he is the least of an egotist. Among all his numerous characters, there is none of which we can say—this is himself. He nowhere appears to paint his own virtues

or to apologise for his own frailties: nor do his imaginations appear to be coloured by the passages of his individual life. His "Sonnets," which Stevens (bless his five wits!) talks of compelling people to read by act of parliament, are the only compositions in which he uses the first person; and these, though they often pathetically touch upon his private circumstances, are too obscure to afford even a plausible ground for conjecture. They show the profundity of his thoughts, his natural tendency toward metaphysical introversion and involution, which the necessity of composing for a mixed audience happily tempered in his dramas, — the half-playful, half-melancholy tenderness of his affections; and, more than all, the noble modesty, which led him to esteem lightly all that he produced, in comparison, not with the works of others, but with the perfect model of his idea, which he generously hoped that succeeding bards might realise.

"If thou survive my well-contented day,
When that churl Death my bones with dust shall cover,
And shall, by Fortune, once more resurvey
These poor rude lines of thy deceased lover,
Compare them with the bettering of the time,
And though they be outstript by every pen,
Reserve them for my love, not for their rhyme,
Exceeded by the height of happier men.
O then vouchsafe me but this loving thought!
Had my friend's muse grown with this growing age,
A dearer birth than this his love had brought,
To march in ranks of better equipage;
But since he died, and poets better prove,
Theirs for their style I'll read, his for his love."

SONNET XXXII.

Yet is this humble estimation of himself so stoutly upborne by the high reverence of his art, and the glad consciousness of undying power, that he fears not to foretell his own immortality.

"Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate;
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date.
Sometimes too hot the eye of Heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;
And every Fair from fair sometimes declines,
By chance or nature's changing course untrimm'd.
But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
Nor lose possession of that fair thou owest,
Nor shall Death brag, thou wanderest in his shade,
While in eternal lines to time thou growest;
So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee."

SONNET XVIII.

"Though I, once gone, to all the world must die,
The earth can yield me but a common grave;
When you, entombed in men's eyes shall lie,
Your monument shall be my gentle verse,
Which eyes not yet created shall o'er-read,
And tongues to be, your being shall rehearse,
When all the breathers of this world are dead."

SONNET LXXXI.

Alas! the greatest poets are but indifferent prophets after all, and often fail in securing the immortality of their subjects, even while they achieve their own. It is unknown to whom these sonnets were addressed, whether he were a real or an imaginary person. As little information can be derived from them, as to the author's worldly circumstances, habits of life, recreations, studies, politics, or religion. They

display, indeed, a softness of disposition, a courtesy, a fine affectionate sense of the beautiful, which could scarce have belonged to a malcontent or a puritan. As far as they go, they prove Shakspeare to have been a Gentleman, and that too in some very critical points. It is hard to praise another with a manly grace, still harder to praise one's self,—but to dispraise one's self in a becoming manner is hardest of all. Puritans of all denominations are much addicted to confession and contrition. Every man of them, if you will believe him, is the chief of sinners; but then their self-abasement is always meant to degrade human nature, which is not a gentlemanlike propensity. But Shakspeare's self-condemnation ennobles his nature; it is a sorrowful perception of disproportion betwixt his actual state and the desired excellence which he imagines to exist in another,—an apprehension lest the soiling contact of his earthly course should infect his better part, and taint his lasting name.

One thing is evident, if he was a Gentleman at all, he must have been so by Nature's own patent and sign-manual. He had little opportunity of learning to be genteel till he was too old to learn. His birth was humble, his education scanty and imperfect,—his early companions unlettered, rude, and riotous. And if the imprudence of his youth and its consequences drove him into the purlieus of lofty rank and courtly splendour,—if he lived to play before a maiden queen, and to be patronised by a high-minded peer,—such intercourse with power and grandeur is

a searching test, a touch-stone that proves, not improves, the intrinsic quality of the ore.

But can it be doubted that Shakspeare, the man Shakspeare, was in heart and soul, in speech and action, in hue and lineament, gait and gesture, a Gentleman of God Almighty's own, undebased by proximity of baseness; unstained even when he fell, and vigorous as a young eagle in his rising?

> "He bears no token of the sabler streams,
> But soars far off among the swans of Thames."

If his portraits may be trusted, he had a most gentlemanlike visage; and that is no small matter. I think the bust at Stratford-upon-Avon bears the strongest marks of resemblance. What could possess Malone to turn it into a whited sepulchre? Nothing but that merciless lust of emendation, which is the Alastor of commentators. But neither Malone, nor Hanmer, nor Warburton himself, with all his perverse ingenuity, not even Bentley, had he treated Shakspeare as unceremoniously as he did Milton's hypothetical editor, could wash away the unction of gentility from Shakspeare's true and living monument, the authentic image of his mind, expressed in the delphic lines of his unvalued book. What Shakspeare *was*, we can but guess; but what he *is*, and will remain as long as memory holds its seat, the world can testify.

His very *precepts* of politeness are better than Lord Chesterfield's, and comprise the substance and the lustre of civility. If his plays contain but little

of the amorous ritual, the scientific gallantry which the French tragedians copied from the Romances of Scudery and his imitators, and little of the courteous enmity and romantic friendship which Spenser has glorified in his allegorical apotheosis of chivalry; they are pervaded with a natural tenderness, an unsophisticated honour, a true gentleness, that can never be out of fashion.

"It much repairs me,
To talk of your good father, In his youth
He had the wit which I can well observe
To-day in our young Lords; but they may jest
Till their own scorn return to them unnoticed,
Ere they can hide their levity in honour,
So like a courtier. Contempt nor bitterness
Were in his pride or sharpness. If they were,
His equals had awaked them, and his honour,
Clock to itself, knew the true moment, when
Exception bade him speak; and at that time,
His tongue obey'd his hand. Who were below him,
He used as creatures of another place,
And bow'd his eminent head to their low ranks,
Making them proud of his humility,
In their poor praise he humbled."

All's Well that Ends Well.

How regally the invalid monarch comments! We might fancy that we heard our own, the most perfect Gentleman that wears a European diadem. Polonius had all his life been an official professor of ceremony and decorum; yet the natural good-breeding of Hamlet instructs him in his own department:—

"*Pol.* My Lords, I will use them according to their desert.

"*Ham.* Odds bodikins, man, much better. Use every man after his desert, and who shall 'scape whipping? Use them after your own honour and dignity; the less they deserve, the more merit is in your bounty."

A strong evidence of Shakspeare's Toryism is the respect with which he always treats established orders, degrees, institutions, and opinions; never seeking to desecrate what time and the world's consent have sanctified. Even prejudices and superstitions he touches gently, as one would be loth to pull down an old crazy shed, if the swallows had built under its eaves, and the ewe and her lamb resorted to its shelter from the storm:—

> "If the sad grave of human ignorance bear
> One flower of hope, oh! pass and leave it there." *

Wherever any character appears simply as the representative of his vocation, he is always endued with honour and dignity. The friar, the judge, the counsellor, the physician, even the steward, are, each in their several capacities, worthy and reverend members of society. If individuals of any profession be held up to scorn or laughter, the ridicule is always so individualised and circumscribed, that it cannot diffuse itself over the profession in general. Are the medical faculty concerned in the starved apothecary? Do "his alligator stuffed," and "ill-shaped fishes," throw discredit on the elegant and fashionable pursuit of Taxidermy? I do not think the privileges of the cloth at all infringed by the humours of Sir Hugh Evans, or Sir Oliver Martext; though, as some learned clerks have felt themselves aggrieved by the exquisite simplicity of Parson Adams, and even thought that Doctor Primrose

* Wordsworth.

should have known rather more of the world, there is no saying. At all events, they were Papists, and therefore partook not of Protestant holiness. Be it remembered, also, that the most venerable professions have certain retainers, whose occupation is villainy. Neither the Law nor the Gospel require the satirist to observe any measure with pettifoggers and Fleet parsons. Happily *both* are obsolete. None but a true Gentleman knows what gentility is—none but a Gentleman of genius can embody gentility in an imaginary portrait, or even copy it correctly from an actual view. Now Shakspeare's characters are always Gentlemen, when they are meant to be so; and when the reverse is intended, the learned delineation of natural coarseness or overstrained nicety, only illustrates the manner in which contraries expound each other. Few writers could intermeddle so frequently and so familiarly with the low, the extravagant, the dull, with mere privation or confounding perversion of intellect, and emerge, like Shakspeare, taintless from the mire. But the crystal mirror receives no stain from the objects it reflects; and the pure imagination of the poet is unsullied by whatever images it may shape and modify. Falstaff, Poins, Doll Tearsheet, Dame Quickly, Dogberry, Shallow, and the rest, are delightful anomalies, wherein we behold our common nature, as we might see our faces, handsome or ugly, in a billowy stream, in flitting fragments, vividly coloured, but broken and destroyed. None but a high-souled Gentleman could have conceived them.

But nothing sets so wide a mark "between the vulgar and the noble seed," as the kind respect and reverential love of womanhood. A man who is always sneering at woman is generally a coarse, profligate, or a coarse bigot, no matter which. True, the noblest minds may be stung by jealousy or disappointed love to treason "against the reigne of Feminitie;" but these libels, so uttered, are but the outcries of insuppressible anguish, the sophistry of distraction, which would infer a general from a particular—the false consolation of a wounded spirit, which would fain believe its private woe an universal calamity, and would have its own "fee grief" entailed on human kind for perpetuity. Many sweeping sarcasms on the sex may doubtless be read in Shakspeare; some I have seen quoted as plain, categorical propositions, declaring the sentiments of the author himself; but they are either uttered by villains, as Iago and Jachimo, and so are confuted in the utterance, or by jealous husbands, as Leontes and Posthumus, under a strong delusion; or by men like Hamlet and King Lear, who having found depravity in particular females, in a revered mother, or in daughters too dearly prized, would rather suppose a congenital frailty of the gender, a necessary ill, inseparable from the matter, than a voluntary vileness in creatures long and inextricably beloved. In all suffering man craves for sympathy; most of all when suffering is linked with shame. But were the gibes of Iago the sentiments of Shakspeare? No more than the vapours of a dunghill which the sun calls forth with

its heat, and gilds with its lustre, are the solar light. But how does the *Poet represent* woman? We all know that it has been asserted, "that Shakspeare wrote for men alone;" but he who said so either was misled by an antithesis, or knew very little of the loveliest part of the creation. Shakspeare's women are very women—not viragoes, heroines, or tragedy-queens, but the sweet creatures whom we know and love, our sisters, mothers, lovers, wives. They seem to think and speak as the best women with whom we are acquainted would think and speak, could they talk in poetry as beautiful as themselves. It is easy to attribute masculine virtues to a female character—to pourtray a virtuous Martia towering above her sex—and to assure the reader that she is perfectly soft, and gentle, and feminine. But Shakspeare knew better than to disparage nature by pretending to make hermaphrodite improvements upon her finest workmanship. He approves his zeal for the ladies, not by inventing a monster of incompatible perfections, and giving it a name of feminine termination, but by subliming to poetry the actual, or at least possible, qualities of real women,—their household affections—their perseverant love, unconquerable by peril, by neglect, by unkindness, by hopelessness—strong even in the very abyss of weakness, and heroic amid the shock of woman's fears. Even where the course of histories (which are sometimes such as only he could have rendered agreeable or even bearable) obliges him to exhibit the aberrations of female infirmity, as in Cressida, in Cleopatra, and

the Juliet of "Measure for Measure;" with how gentle a hand does he seem to soothe while he upbraids; and smilingly relents in the very execution of his satire! Nay, in the darkest picture he ever drew, that of Lear's demon daughters, the very hideousness of the delineation precludes the possibility of any woman, that is not utterly unsexed, discovering a single trait of herself therein. Lady Macbeth is Shakspeare's nearest approach to a heroine.* She is not, like Goneril, a monster—she is only a strong-minded woman—and from a strong-minded woman—

* Were there no other proof against the authenticity of the First Part of King Henry the Sixth, the slanderous, filthy, blasphemous libel on the Maid of Orleans which it contains, would convince me that it is not Shakspeare's. In representing her as a witch, the author only falls into the superstition of the time; but in degrading her to a strumpet, he exposes the rotten malignity of a nasty mind. A Frenchman, it is true, has done worse; but that Frenchman was an infidel.

In whatever degree Joan of Arc was instrumental in frustrating the ambitious designs of our monarchs upon France, in that same measure is she creditor to the thanks of England. Had Henry the Fifth lived long enough to consolidate his conquests, or had he been succeeded by a princely warrior like himself, England might now have been a petty province of the Gallic empire; or, like Ireland, struggled in uneasy dependency—that bane of improvement. It would have been poor comfort to remember, that the alienated and Gallicised dynasty sprung from British race. The Mandshurs conquered China, but the consequences have been as if the Chinese had conquered the Mandshurs. The Duke of Normandy vanquished the King of England, and seized his crown. Could Normandy have reverted, as a forfeited fief, to France, if its dukes had never crossed the Channel? A small army may change the royal family of a large empire, but a small nation (and such were the English in comparison to the French) cannot keep the mastery over a great one. Even as a strong and rapid river, when first it rushes upon the sea, drives back the sluggish brine, and lords it over ancient ocean, but ere a league be passed, the inland waters are lost and indistinguishable in the salt immensity of waves, so may a handful of brave men bear down the hosts of an overgrown population, and keep state awhile, as an aristocracy, a privileged order, the few over the many, but it cannot last. In a few generations the conquerors and the conquered become one people. Quantity prevails over quality, and the less numerous race pay dearly for their nominal pre-eminence with the loss of national existence. More than all, the claim of England to the French crown was unjust; and injustice meets with its lightest punishment when it is unsuccessful.

Libera nos, Domine—Yet she is a woman—she has given suck—and loved the babe that milked her. It is amazing how small a beam of light redeems a soul from the condemnation of utter darkness. The slight misgiving,—

> "Had he not look'd like
> My father, as he slept, I had done it,"

though it occupies but a line and a half, brings back the speaker into the compass of human sympathies. She is a rebellious, but not quite a reprobate spirit. We regard her with terror and amazement, not with horror and disgust.

But who that, by fancy's potent spell, hath listened to Miranda in her enchanted isle, or wandered with Hermia in the fairy wood,—that hath overheard Juliet in Capulet's garden, or toyed with Rosalind beneath the greenwood tree,—or seen the pastoral Princess Perdita in her holiday weeds,—or heard Desdemona chant her death-song of Willow, can dispute the stainless generosity—the bright and lovely honour —the soul-subduing courtesy of our mighty Bard?*

"Out, hyperbolical Fiend! talk'st thou of nought but ladies!"

Ay—of Tories—of poetical Tories—and Shakspeare in particular, whose natural indefeasible gentility we

* In estimating the female characters of Shakspeare, something must be allowed to the manners of the time,—a time in which primitive plainness, or, if it must be so, grossness,—contrasted strangely with the ceremonial refinements and metaphorical circumlocutions of Euphuism. Our great dramatist could scarce have foreseen that an age would come when a family edition of his works would be deemed necessary, or he would perhaps "have blotted for himself before." But on this head may I be allowed to borrow the words of a writer, whose worst fault is that he writes too little—the delightful Elia, alias Charles Lamb, who has done

have proved, past contradiction.' But is every Gentleman a Tory? Yes, amid all vicissitudes of speculation. The moon has many phases, but truth has many more; yet the absolute figure of the moon changes not, neither does the absolute form of truth. Now there are men, who, if they chance to have noticed the moon first in a crescent or gibbous state, will swear that she is not the moon when she is at the full. These are your consistent politicians, your stickers to principle. Others there are, who, possessed of eye-sight, but lacking memory and forecast, maintain that every shape in which the moon appears, be it crescent, quarter, half, or full, presents her total substance. These are your temporisers—your expedient-mongers, whose hand-to-mouth measures for ever court the moment, which will not stop to hearken to their suit. And there are a few creatures

more to introduce our elder poets to the hearts of the people, than all the editors and Bibliomaniacs put together.

"One characteristic of our excellent old poets, is their being able to bestow grace on subjects which naturally do not seem susceptible of any. I will mention two instances, Zelnare in the 'Arcadia' of Sidney, and Helena in the 'All 's Well that Ends Well' of Shakspeare. What can be more unpromising at first sight than the idea of a young man disguising himself in woman's attire, and passing himself off for a woman amongst women—and that too for a long space of time? Yet Sir Philip has preserved such a matchless decorum, that neither does Pyrocles' manhood suffer any stain for the effeminacy of Zelnare, nor is the respect due to the princess at all diminished when the deception comes to be known. In the sweetly-constituted mind of Sir Philip Sidney, it seems as if no ugly thought nor unhandsome meditation could find a harbour. He turned all that he touched into images of honour and virtue. Helena in Shakspeare is a young woman seeking a man in marriage. The ordinary laws of courtship are reversed; the habitual feelings are violated; yet with such exquisite address this dangerous subject is handled, that Helena's forwardness loses her no honour; delicacy dispenses with her laws in her favour, and Nature in her single case seems content to suffer a sweet violation."—*Dramatic Specimens. —Maid's Tragedy.*

of "large discourse, looking before and after," endued with eye-sight and foresight, and memory, who can trace the mutable planet through her changes, and recognise her in all; and perceiving in each presentation a history of the past and a promise of the future, are enabled to construct out of the ever-varying phenomena, the true idea of her proper form, and to calculate times and seasons unborn, according to the permanent and immutable law, which explains, causes, rules and integrates the ceaseless succession of changes. And these are your true Tories, who build the commonweal, not on the shifting shoals of expedience, or the incalculable tides of popular will, but on the sure foundation of the divine purpose, demonstrated by the great and glorious ends of rational being, who deduce the rights and duties of man, not from the animal nature, in which neither right nor duty can inhere, not from a state of nature which never existed, nor from an arbitrary contract which never took place in the memory of men nor angels, but from the demands of the complex life, of the soul and the body, defined by reason and conscience, expounded and ratified by revelation.

Many true Gentlemen, and some great poets, have doubtless called and thought themselves Whigs, Republicans, even Jacobins and Radicals. But however Whiggish or revolutionary their particular opinions may be, however absurd or unjustifiable the means whereby they hope to improve the condition of mankind, they are still Tories in their object. They aim at a high mark—they would raise social

institutions to their standard of human nature, and forget that this standard is purely ideal—that themselves, with all advantages of birth and breeding, under all the purifying influences of knowledge and elegance, fall infinitely short of it—that it never can be realised while man is fettered with a mortal body in alliance with a corrupted will—that it is only to be discerned by Faith, and that by Hope and Love its benign and sublimating influences are conveyed to the lower orb of practic works and secular relations. Still the error is a Tory error—it acknowledges an absolute Truth, an indefeasible Majesty; but because that majesty can never be more than imperfectly represented by a man, it thinks to mend the matter by imparting it to many. But in this error Shakspeare had no part—he was precluded from it by his adequate knowledge of human nature as it is; in the light of which knowledge he saw and admired the whole structure of the British state, the most perfect system of representation ever devised —representation not of any number of men that may exist at any given time, but of permanent man, in all his human functions, interests, and capacities, making due provision for every demand of his complicated nature, giving to each faculty its proper sphere and area of growth, energy, and enjoyment, and subjecting all to one law of subordination. The imaginary republic of Plato did not so happily symbolise the powers which uphold the "little kingdom, Man," as does the actual polity of Britain. It were no preposterous conceit to affirm, that nature typifies, in

each individual man, the several offices and orders which our commonwealth distributes to the several ranks and functionaries of the state and church. There is the regality of reason, "which can do no wrong," sacred, indefeasible, irresponsible, never to be deposed or violated by any suffrage, combination, consent, or conspiracy of lower delegated powers, yet of itself eyeless, handless, passionless, seeing, acting, and feeling, mediately by the understanding, its responsible minister, who is again dependent for information upon the senses, its subordinate agents. There are the Operative Energies, Talents, Passions, Appetites, good servants all, but bad masters; useful citizens, always to be controlled, but never oppressed, and most effective when they are neither pampered nor starved. There, too, is the Executive Will; Prudence, Chancellor of the Exchequer; Self-love, Minister for the Home Department; Observation, Secretary of Foreign Affairs; Poetry, (alias Lord Lowther,) over the Woods and Forests; Lord Keeper Conscience, a sage, scrupulous, hesitating, head-shaking, hair-splitting personage, whose decisions are most just, but too slow to be useful, and who is readier to weep for what *is* done than to direct what should be done; Wit, Manager of the House of Commons, a flashy either-sided gentleman, who piques himself on never being out; and Self-denial, always eager to vacate his seat and accept the Chiltern Hundreds.

Now, the genius of Shakspeare was perfectly constitutional, or, in other words, Tory. His mind was

the sphere and mirror of all humanity; knowing himself, he knew all men. The monarchical, aristocratical, and popular elements were as happily tempered in his poetic character as in the constitution which he revered. In as much as he was a deep-thinking philosopher, profoundly versed in the immutable, irrefragable forms of reason, it was monarchical; as he was a poet, passionately enamoured of the beautiful, the grand, the elegant, the exquisite, the excellent, it was aristocratical. As he was a dramatist, sympathetically intelligent of all that works within, and experimentally acquainted with the signs and demonstrations, the dark hints, the obscure paradoxes, and self-confounding oracles of passion, in its homeliest and most familiar instances, no less than in its tragical pomp and majesty,—minutely observant of the varieties and specific differences of minds, of the reciprocal influences of thought and feeling, of the partial eclipses which passion, folly, age, and ignorance, produce on the understanding,—of the secret impulses which are best known to those whom they impel; in short, of all that in strict phrase constitutes and reveals the nature of man—it was popular. None ever better distinguished the varieties of human nature, and few seem to have so thoroughly comprehended the mighty truth, that, in all its varieties and modifications, that nature is essentially one and the same,—a truth which is the sole law and measure of relative morality, the principle of just command and liberty, the key to all heart-knowledge, and the ground of all communion between souls.

This happy, constitutional mixture appears not only in his plots and characters, but in his language, his metaphors, and even in his versification. His muse, like Homer's, brings forth men and women, not heroes and heroines, preux chevaliers, or dames of romance. His characters are exalted by the grandeur of intellect, of feeling, of imagination, not by inaccessible remoteness from ordinary thoughts and cares.

He is not afraid to trust his most interesting personages in promiscuous company, or to place them in situations highly inconsistent with the decorum of artificial tragedy. His allusions, which oftentimes present the grandest objects of nature, the finest imaginations of man, at others recal the downright literal utensils of our daily business and amusements. His language sometimes soars as high as sense can accompany it—sometimes wears a mask of clownish rudeness. His measure often quits the stately march of blank verse, for the mazy dance of rhyme, and sometimes saunters along in something like prose.—But in all this we feel no discord, no want of keeping.

If classical authority were needed, we should refer the admirers of Shakspeare not to the Greek tragedians, whose dramas, admirable in an admirable kind, are too artificial, too colossal in their proportions, too massy in their colouring, to bear any analogy to the more human scenes of our favourite; but to Homer, who was a far more minute, and individualising dramatist, in fact, though he used the form of narrative, far more dramatic than Æschylus and his great compeers. Homer, like Shakspeare, was a good Tory,—

he revered a good dinner. His warriors eat, and drink, and sleep, like ordinary mortals. Even his gods are not absolutely incorporeal,—his characters have passions more energetic and violent, but by no means more refined and spiritualised than common experience displays. They lift greater weights, hurl longer javelins, level huger carcasses than their degenerate descendants; they speak better, that is to say, more forcibly, vividly, fluently, and harmoniously,—they have bequeathed a language to posterity, and given speech to affections that were dumb; but the very fitness of their phrases to the common occasions of life, the daily goings-on of ordinary bosoms, is proof demonstrative that the feelings they were first used to express were no other than those which the unfailing course of circumstances excites in perpetual recurrence.

The number of humble allusions, similes, and metaphors, the minute and sometimes tedious detail of the homely business of domestic economy, so conspicuous in the "Iliad," and yet more in the "Odyssey," with which some critics have been offended, and which some poets have unskilfully imitated, is not to be ascribed solely or chiefly to the rude simplicity of an age unacquainted with decorum, which had not discovered the vulgarity of familiar things, nor put a barrier between the gross and the refined! This homely circumstantiality is proper to the genius of Homer, and would never have left him, had he sung in the most Frenchified period of vicious refinement, under the prevalence of that pseudo-aristocratic deli-

cacy, which, emanating from a morbidly-conscious sensuality, teaches its victims to be ashamed of their own nature, of the very means whereby they live and are sustained,—a delicacy thin and sickly as the vapour which, glittering in the sun-beams, assumes kindred with the sky, while its pestilential miasma proclaims it an exhalation of earth's worst rottenness. Just such a fog long hovered over the fertile fields of France, blighting her genius, perverting her moral sense, and corrupting her institutions. No less a tempest than the Revolution could suffice to blow it clear away. For a while it partially tainted the atmosphere of England; but, luckily, not till her literature and institutions had attained that robust and youthful maturity which enabled them to stand the foul infection. The British oak spread out its giant arms in health and verdure, and with all the flowers that grew beneath its shade, sent forth such streams of life and fragrance as subdued or neutralised the emasculating malaria that was creeping over the Channel.

Homer was the Shakspeare of his age; the poet of action; of passion as it is the proximate cause of action; of human nature as it is embodied in sensible effects. The world of thought, the mysterious substratum of our affections, sympathies, antipathies, undefined anticipations, and reminiscences, and the dread secret of the hidden will, of which the conscious volition is only an abortive issue, a fleeting phenomenon, were to him a world unknown. But Shakspeare's intellect was not only representative of the

State, but of the Church also,—it was not only in just and balanced proportion, monarchical, aristocratical, and popular, but it was metaphysical, and in some sort theological. He did not, indeed, turn the theatre into a conventicle,—he wrote neither sermons nor sacred dramas, (though we do not see why a religious play might not be written as properly as a religious novel, and even acted for the benefit of a charitable foundation, as devoutly as an oratorio, whether in playhouse or cathedral,) far less did he employ his histrionic talents as a preacher; for in those days, preaching, direct or indirect, would have sounded strangely from one, who was by nature a Gentleman—by education a wool-comber—by indiscretion a deer-stealer—by necessity a player, and a poet, *jure divino*. Neither does he abound in allusions to the religious disputes of the time. I doubt not he was a good Protestant, malgre the purgatory of Hamlet's Ghost, and the very favourable specimen of monastic virtues, exhibited in Friar Lawrence. But had he been a thorough no-Popery man, methinks he would have protested against Papal supremacy, through a more estimable mouth-piece than the base-minded, murderous, infidel King John, who crouched in the sobriety of cowardice to the idolised power, which he, most likely, only defied in the valour of drunkenness. Between the dramatists and Puritans there raged a *Bellum Internecinum;* yet Shakspeare was all but a neutral in the fray. He does indeed make Sir Toby Belch revile Malvolio for Puritanism; but Maria, "the nettle of India, the youngest wren

of nine," the prettiest piece of shrewd mischief that ever was invented, defends him from the charge. "The d——l a Puritan that he is, or anything constantly but a time-server," which reflection I might be inclined to apply to certain recently emancipated T. P.'s, only I am sure that the liberality and candour of my friend Christopher, would never suffer such personal calumny to scintillate from the coruscant page of Maga. Sir Andrew Aguecheek, forgetting that he lives in Illyria, "had as lief be a Brownist as a Politician;" and Sir Toby, in putting to the self-love-sick steward the pertinent question, "Dost thou think, because thou art virtuous, that there shall be no more cakes and ale?" has been supposed to darken the white up-turned, lack-lustre eye, of those schismatics *in ovo*,—those callow regicides,—those impugned vipers, who, when they dared not undermine the altar, valorously upset a maypole, and enacted equal abhorrence to minced-pies and to masses. But the question requires an answer from the "unco good" of every sect, as well as of the four denominations. After all, the testimony of these two doughty, droughty knights, of whom the one has just wit enough to be a knave, and the other almost enough of simplicity to make him honest, cannot have been introduced but as an argument of laughter. The Clown of the "Winter's Tale," Perdita's foster-brother, relates in a soliloquy (only Shakspeare's clowns think aloud) that the shearers are "three-man, song-men all, and very good ones, —*but one Puritan among them, and he sings Psalms*

to hornpipes." Some of the modern evangelicals have adapted hymns to Moore's Melodies, and to most of the fashionable songs, quadrilles, waltzes, &c. —thinking it hard, as they say, that Satan should have all the good music to himself. There is nothing new under the sun, not even a new absurdity.

These, and probably a few more jokes of like calibre, are all the revenge which the gentle Willy ever took against a sect who were not only endeavouring to preach him to eternal perdition, but literally to deprive him of his occupation, whose spiritual seed, even to this day, cease not to blaspheme him, like Jews, or, far worse, to mutilate him like Turks. Some of his contemporaries and successors, it is true, were not quite so forbearing. But what is that to him or to us either?

Shakspeare, then, as a *Lay-poet*, wisely and reverently abstained from frequent allusions to religion, either in comic or serious vein. How then was his genius theological? Because, in fathoming the abyss of human nature, he transcended nature, and explored the hidden regions of the soul,—discovered instincts, prophetic yearnings, unutterable vacuities of spirit, which nothing in the sensible or intellectual world can satisfy or fulfil.

> "—— Those obstinate questionings
> Of sense and outward things,
> Fallings from us, vanishings;
> Blank misgivings of a Creature,
> Moving about in worlds not realised,
> High instincts, before which our mortal Nature
> Did tremble like a guilty Thing surprised!"

Oh, Wordsworth, thou too art a poet!—and like Shakspeare,

> "Read'st the eternal deep
> Haunted for ever by the eternal mind."

In short, because he penetrated the Sanctuary of Faith, the holy place where Faith alone should dwell, but which, alas! too, too often, since the first temptation, hath been invaded by vain mistrusting curiosity, the dupe and tool of sensual and malignant selfishness, seeking to make the things above sense subject to sense, to enslave spiritual powers to corporal purposes, to circumscribe infinity in formal bounds, and imprison eternity in a chain of conscious moments.

In reproof of this sad desecration of man's possible sanctity, the genius of Shakspeare (for I dare not aver that he foresaw or designed the scope of its workings) created the tragedies of Macbeth and Hamlet. In plain language, (for I am afraid I have been a little mystical,) the ethical purport of those dramas, is to show the evil and confusion which must be introduced into the moral world by a sensible communication between natural and supernatural beings.

In Shakspeare's age, the possibility of such communication was an article no less of the philosophic than of the popular creed. The gravest sceptics only dared to doubt the authenticity of certain recorded facts, the legitimacy of certain logical inductions. The learned of our generation (I speak not of the half-learned ignorant) conclude, that there is no such possibility. Not content with questioning the

à posteriori evidence of each particular case, they determine *à priori*, that no conceivable strength of evidence could establish the fact of an apparition, or a magical operation. They do not, *all of them*, deny the boundless powers of Heaven, nor can they pretend to know all the powers of earth; but between heaven and earth, they admit nothing more than is thought of in their philosophy. Optical delusion, nervous excitement, indigestion, and casual coincidence, are to explain all the mystery of ancestral fear. They pronounce all extra-scriptural miracles, apocryphal, and prove the vast invisible realms of air untenanted.

> "The central caverns of the hollow earth,
> That never heard the sea's tempestuous call,
> Nor the dread summons of impatient thunder;
> Which not the Earthquake moves, nor solid flood
> Of Ætna's molten entrails o'er can warm.—
> Dread vacancy! Cold, silent, changeless, holds
> Of blank privation, and primeval Nothing,
> Obstructed by the o'er-incumbent World—
> Believed of old, the home of wicked Dreams,
> Night-walking Fancies, Fiends invisible,
> As troubled thoughts!"—*Earth, a Poem.*

Geologists, no doubt, give a different account of the matter. But Shakspeare wrote in another age—for men of another generation;—men, who deemed that no impassable gulf divides the things seen from the unseen powers; who had no corpuscular theories to guard them against the shapings of a passionate imagination—from inhibited hopes, and blind interminable fears—from thoughts that go astray in the wilderness of possibility—from "speculations that are the rottenest part of the core of the fruit of the

tree of knowledge." Grievously are they mistaken who think that the revival of literature was the death of superstition—that ghosts, demons, and exorcists retreated before the march of intellect, and fled the British shore along with monks, saints, and masses. Superstition, deadly superstition, may co-exist with much learning, with high civilization, with any religion, or with utter irreligion. Canidia wrought her spells in the Augustan age, and Chaldean fortune-tellers haunted Rome in the sceptical days of Juvenal. Matthew Hopkins, the witch-finder, and Lilly, the astrologer, were contemporaries of Selden, Harrington, and Milton. Perhaps there was never a more superstitious period than that which produced Erasmus and Bacon.

Whether Shakspeare believed the popular creed, which his more erudite contemporaries exhausted their book-learning and their logical acuteness to engraft upon the reigning philosophy, and to reconcile with their favourite theories, it is idle to inquire. That in his youth he listened with a faith sincere to all fire-side traditions, may be regarded as certain. That he ever totally and confidently disbelieved them, is exceedingly doubtful.

But his fine sense, and knowledge of the soul, which his imagination extended to all conceivable cases and circumstances, informed him of the moral unfitness of such supernatural intercommunion; and if it did not demonstrate (what has never yet been demonstrated) the physical impossibility, or logical absurdity, of the popular Pneumatology, intimated its

inconsistency with the moral welfare of man, and, consequently, with the revealed will of Heaven. Never was poetry more sublimely employed than in rebuking that idolatrous and perverted faith, which transgresses the limits of sense and sympathy, yet stops short of the infallible One, to whom alone faith is due.

The proper state of man can only be maintained in sympathy and communion with his fellow-men. *Nulla salus extra ecclesiam.* All legitimate rules, motives, and purposes of action must be universally explicable and intelligible. All lawful and salutary knowledge must be communicable to every capable understanding. But it is manifest, that one who held intercourse, derived information, received aid, or took orders from a disembodied spirit, no matter of what degree, would be excluded from human sympathy and communion, insulated and excommunicated; his knowledge would no longer be "discourse of reason;" and out of that knowledge duties, or apparent duties, would arise, widely diverging from, and frequently crossing, the prescribed and covenanted track of human conduct—abrogating the public law of conscience. Hence an inward contradiction, a schism in the soul, jarring impulses, and all the harmony of thoughts and feelings like sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh. Hence, in impetuous natures, crime impelling crime, and in meditative spirits, a paralytic will, a helpless melancholy madness, rendered the more insupportable by the co-existence of an unimpaired understanding,

FRANCIS BACON SOCIETY

INTERSCRIPT.

My dear H.

I have duly received all your seven successive sheets through the safest of all circulating mediums, the Post-office; and as I have answered none of them, I hope that you believe me dead. I trust, too, that you have fixed the era of my decease at a period long anterior to the date of your last epistle—as I should be sorry that you wrote my biography, under an impression that I had died seven letters in your debt; for nothing so souring to the sweetest blood as the feeling of having been absurdly treated by a friend whose virtues you had firmly undertaken to commemorate. But, my dear H., how the deuce could I answer your letters—kept, as I have been, in Cimmerian darkness as to your local habitation in this unintelligible world? You have absolutely annihilated time and place, that two friends might be unhappy; and withheld from me the slightest clue by which I could discover your sylvan, champaign, mountainous, city, or suburban retreat. One letter is dated "Wednesday," another "Friday," another "Sunday," and so on—but no hint dropped of the month or year—county or kingdom. Some progress I have made in the study of ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphics, under the tuition of my learned and ingenious friend, James Browne, LLD.; but they throw no light whatever upon the modern Hieroglyphics of the Post-office department—to the deciphering of which there is a single objection, seemingly insurmountable, namely, that not one red stain in ten thousand has any character at all; so that what appears at one moment to the perplexed spirit of one inquirer long devoted to the study, to mean possibly "Kendal," the very next moment, "as a change comes over the spirit of his dream,'

seems to the sceptic to be "Japan." Methought I had made out on your fourth epistle, as I "turned up its silver lining to the light," "Constantinople," and presumed that you were about to set off to Schumla with the Sultan. This was by candlelight; but on trying the stamp by gas, I could have sworn it was Kidderminster, and that you had sent me an account of the great strike of the Carpeteers. But to be brief, where you now are, and have been for the last six months, I am much exhausted and reduced to a mere shadow by having all in vain been occupied during the summer in conjecturing; and the only resource left is to address you in Maga. She will find you out, or the devil is in it, be your tent pitched in Europe, America, Asia, or Africa. And do, my dear fellow, do, I pray you, remember not to forget to jot down—through the same channel, if you please—about what degree of latitude and longitude you are sitting or sailing at date of your next, so that I may have something more than a mere guess of the hemisphere. Be assured that Scotland stands where it did, and that all the people are well, and anxious for your arrival in Edinburgh. The city is filling fast, and the winter threatens to be a mild one, so don't care about your cough—nor pay any attention to all that silly nonsense about asthma and consumption. You are neither a whit more asthmatic nor consumptive than people at large—and as for dyspepsy, I should as readily believe you capable of picking pockets. Come to us, then, my dear H., do come to us—yourself by the light coach, your baggage, at least the hairy trunk with the articles, by the heavy waggon. My housekeeper, a fat worthy soul—has been sleeping in the bed set apart for your honour for several months, so it is well aired; and you need be under no fear of being blown up by an explosion of fire-damp, as you providentially were, without serious, or at least permanent injury, on the first night of your last visit to the Lodge. As we are to see you so soon, I shall reserve all I have got to say about your Series of Specimens of the great Greek Poets, &c. &c. &c. &c. &c. &c. &c., till our first game at snap-dragon in the Sanctum. They will

be a new glory in the garland round the forehead of Maga, who will then be a very Minerva. I agree with you in thinking that beautiful as she has hitherto been in her budding growth, winning all hearts and charming all eyes, she is becoming monthly more irresistible in the full-blown bloom of her matured magnificence. Not one dissentient voice is now heard from the decision of the world, that she is, out of all comparison, the finest woman of her age, uniting in her own single self, Harmonious Discord, Contradiction, all the mental and bodily attractions of an Eve, a Judith, a Cassandra, a Lucretia, a Cleopatra, a Zenobia, and a Semiramis. She is quite wild about your article on Shakspeare. It is, my dear H., indeed an article to win any female heart—and poor Emily Callender, after reading your beautiful explanation of Hamlet's behaviour to Ophelia, walked with tears in her fair eyes away into the Virgin's Bower, where she sat pity-and-love-sick till sunset. Knowing by experience that strong emotion, when long sustained, becomes almost unsustainable, I have divided your fine Essay into two parts—and lo! here I am standing on the "Landing-place," to use the language of one whom I honour and you reverence—and that I may soon see you in the body coming dreamily down the avenue, is the warm wish, my dear H., of your affectionate friend,

CHRISTOPHER NORTH.

BUCHANAN LODGE,
Oct. 14, 1828.

ON THE CHARACTER OF HAMLET.

MAY not that critical problem, the character of Hamlet, be partly elucidated upon this principle? No fictitious, and few historical personages, have given rise to more controversy. Some commentators hold him up as the pattern of all that is virtuous, noble, wise, and amiable; others condemn him as a mass of unfeeling inconsistency. It is doubted whether his madness be real or assumed. Stevens declares that he must be madman or villain. Boswell, the younger, makes him out to be a quiet, good sort of man, unfit for perilous times and arduous enterprises, and, in fine, parallels him with Charles I. and George III.

Goethe (in his Wilhelm Meister) burns, as the children say at *hide-and-seek*, but when about, as it were, to lay hands on the truth, he is blown "diverse innumerable leagues." "It is clear to me," he says, "that Shakspeare's intention was to exhibit the effects of a great action imposed as a duty upon a mind too feeble for its accomplishment. Here is an oak-tree, planted in a china vase, proper only to receive the most delicate flowers. The roots strike out, and the vessel flies to pieces. A pure, noble,

highly moral disposition, but without that energy of soul which constitutes the hero, sinks under a load, which it can neither support nor resolve to abandon. All his obligations are sacred to him, but this alone is above his powers. An impossibility is required at his hands—not an impossibility in itself, but that which is so to him. Observe how he turns, shifts, advances, and recedes—how he is constantly reminding himself of his great commission, which he nevertheless in the end seems almost entirely to lose sight of, and this without recovering his former tranquillity."

Now, surely, feebleness of mind, the fragility of a china vase, lack of power and energy, are not the characteristics of Hamlet. So far from it, he is represented as fearless, almost above the strength of humanity. He does not "set his life at a pin's fee." He converses, unshaken, with what the stoutest warriors have trembled to think upon, jests with a visitant from darkness, and gathers unwonted vigour from the pangs of death. Nor, in all his musings, all the many-coloured mazes of his thoughts, is there anything of female softness—anything of amiable weakness. His anguish is stern and masculine, stubbornly self-possessed, above the kind relief of sighs, and tears, and soothing pity. The very style of his more serious discourse is more austere, philosophic,—I had almost said prosaic,—than that of any other character in Shakspeare. It is not the weight and magnitude, the danger and difficulty of the deed imposed as a duty, that weighs upon his soul, and

enervates the sinews of his moral being, but the preternatural contradiction involved in the duty itself, the irregular means through which the duty is promulgated and known.

Presumptuous as it may appear to offer a new theory on a subject that has exercised so many wits before, or to pretend to know what Shakspeare intended, where his intentions have been so variously conjectured, I will venture to take a cursory view of this most Shakspearean of all Shakspeare's dramas, and endeavour to explain, not justify, the most questionable points in the character of the hero.

Let us, for a moment, put Shakspeare out of the question, and consider Hamlet as a real person, a recently deceased acquaintance. In real life, it is no unusual thing to meet with characters every whit as obscure as that of the Prince of Denmark; men seemingly accomplished for the greatest actions, clear in thought, and dauntless in deed, still meditating mighty works, and urged by all motives and occasions to the performance,—whose existence is nevertheless an unperforming dream; men of noblest, warmest affections, who are perpetually wringing the hearts of those whom they love best; whose sense of rectitude is strong and wise enough to inform and govern a world, while their acts are the hapless issues of casualty and passion, and scarce to themselves appear their own. We cannot conclude that all such have seen ghosts; though the existence of ghost-seers is as certain, as that of ghosts is problematical. But they will generally be found, either by a course of study

and meditation too remote from the art and practice of life,—by designs too pure and perfect to be executed in earthly materials, or from imperfect glimpses of an intuition beyond the defined limits of communicable knowledge, to have severed themselves from the common society of human feelings and opinions, and become as it were ghosts in the body. Such a man is Hamlet; an habitual dweller with his own thoughts, —preferring the possible to the real,—refining on the ideal forms of things, till the things themselves become dim in his sight, and all the common doings and sufferings, the obligations and engagements of the world, a weary task, stale and unprofitable. By natural temperament he is more a thinker than a doer. His abstract intellect is an overbalance for his active impulses. The death of his father, his mother's marriage, and his own exclusion from the succession, —sorrow for one parent, shame for another, and resentment for himself,—tend still further to confirm and darken a disposition, which the light heart of happy youth had hitherto counteracted. Sorrow contracts around his soul, and shuts it out from cheerful light, and wholesome air. It may be observed in general, that men of thought succumb more helplessly beneath affliction than the men of action. How many dear friends may a soldier lose in a single campaign, and yet find his heart whole in his winter quarters; the natural decease of one whereof in peace and security, would have robbed his days to come of half their joy! In this state of mind is Hamlet first introduced; not distinctly conscious of more than his

father's death and mother's dishonour, yet haunted with undefined suspicions and gloomy presentiments, —weary of all things, most weary of himself,—without hope or purpose. His best affections borne away on the ebbing tide of memory, into the glimmering past, he longs to be dissolved, to pass away like the dew of morning. Be it observed, that this longing for dissolution, this fond familiarity with graves, and worms, and epitaphs, is, as it were, the back ground, the bass accompaniment of Hamlet's character. It sounds at ever recurrent intervals like the slow knell of a pompous funeral, solemnising the mournful music and memorial pageantry. No sooner is he left alone, in the first scene after his entrance, than he wishes "that the Everlasting had not fixed his canon 'gainst self-slaughter;" in the last, *in articulo mortis*, he requests of his only friend,—

> "If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart,
> Absent thee from felicity awhile,
> And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain,
> To tell my story."

So little does the dying man love life, that he holds it the utmost sacrifice of friendship to endure it. But this desire is not prompted by any anticipation of future bliss; he dreams neither of a Mahometan paradise, nor a Christian heaven; his yearning is to melt,—to die,—to sleep,—not to be. He delights in contemplating human nature in the dust, and seems to identify man with his rotting relics. Death, the most awful of all thoughts, is to him a mere argument of scorn, convicting all things of hollowness and

transiency. Not that he does not believe in a nobler, a surviving human being; but the spring of hope is so utterly dried up within him, that it flows not at the prospect of immortality.

It might easily be imagined,—it has even plausibly been asserted,—that the appearance of a departed spirit, admitting it to be authenticated, would, so far from a curse and a terror, be a most invaluable blessing to mankind, inasmuch as it would remove every doubt of an hereafter, and demonstrate the existence of a spiritual principle. He that knew what was in the heart of man, and all its possible issues, has declared otherwise: "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead;" and even so. The knowledge, the fact, the revelation which finds no companion in the mind, —which remains a mere exception, an isolated wonder,—may cast a doubt on all that was before believed, but can never of itself produce a fruitful or a living faith. Seeing is not necessarily believing; at least, it is not rational conviction, which can only take place on one of two conditions: 1st, If the new truth be itself conformable with and consequent to former convictions: or, 2ndly, If it be able to conform and atone all other truths to itself, and become the law and centre of the total being. The latter is the blessed might of Christian truth, when, being received by faith to faith, it renews and ferments the regenerate soul. The former is the condition of all growth in mere human knowledge.

All the movements of Hamlet's mind, and conse-

quently all his words and actions, would be explicable on the supposition, that the Ghost were, like the air-drawn dagger in Macbeth, a mere illusion. But the belief of Shakspeare's age, the nature of dramatic representation, the very idea of poetry, which deals not with the invisible processes of mind, but with their sensible symbols, selected, integrated, realized by the imagination, require that the apparition should be considered as a real, *objective* existence. Accordingly, the appearance is authenticated with the most matter-of-fact judicial exactness. It is produced before several witnesses, and, in the first instance, to impartial evidence,—to Horatio and the rivals of his watch, —before Hamlet is even apprised of the visitation. There is a detail, a circumstantiality in the successive exhibitions of the departed monarch, worthy of attentive observation. First, we have the chill night —the dreary platform—the homely routine of changing guard—the plain courtesy of honest soldiers—then the incredulity of the scholar—the imperfect narrative, interrupted by the silent entrance of the royal shade—the passing and repassing of the "perturbed spirit"—the wide guesses, and auld-world talk of the sentinels, calling up all records of their memory to find precedents, to bring their individual case under the general law, and to dignify it by illustrious example:

"In the most high and palmy state of Rome,
A little ere the mightiest Julius fell,
The graves stood tenantless, and the sheeted dead
Did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets."

The images of superstition are not always terrible. The halo, no doubt, is an unsubstantial, it may be an ill-omened vision; still it is the halo of the pure and lovely moon.

"Some say, that ever 'gainst that season comes
Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,
This bird of dawning singeth all night long;
And then they say, no spirit dares stir abroad;
The nights are wholesome; then no planets strike;
No fairy takes, nor witch hath power to charm;
So hallowed and so gracious is the time."

But it is impertinent to quote Hamlet, or anything else now. Suffice it, then, to remark, with what consummate skill this introductory, and it might be deemed supererogatory scene, prepares the way for the subsequent disclosures. The wonder, the terror of the Ghost is shaded and humanised; the spectator is familiarised to his aspect before he becomes a speaker and an agent in the drama, and is enabled to sympathise fully with Hamlet, who almost forgets the spectre in the father. His awe, his surprise, is momentary; his natural doubts are suppressed by a strong effort of his will, an act of faith,—

"I'll call thee King—Hamlet—Father!"

It is not easy to reduce this Ghost to any established creed or mythology. Of the Scandinavian system, as recorded in the semi-christianised Edda, no trace is discoverable in the whole history. Nor does it appear that a penal or expiatory purgatory is indicated in any record of Gothic theology. Neither their heaven, their hell, nor their gods, were supposed to be eternal;

they were all ordained to perish at the last, and a new paradise of peace and innocence to succeed the drunken Valhalha. But with these things Hamlet's Ghost had no acquaintance. He talks like a good Catholic; though some commentators have taken pains to prove, by chronological arguments, that he must be a Pagan. A Pagan, however, would scarce complain that he was cut off

"Unhousel'd, disappointed, unaneled;"

and yet, would not a true Catholic spirit have requested prayers and masses, rather than vengeance?

Some persons, from these allusions to Popish practices, have inferred that Shakspeare was himself a Papist. If he were, let us hope, that before his death he reconciled himself to a Church, which, considering the theatrical turn of many of her own ceremonies, deals rather scurvily with players and play-writers. But first, the doctrine of Purgatory does not imply Popery, though the priesthood have contrived to turn it to excellent account. It is older than Christianity itself; it has been the professed belief of some professing Protestants, and, it is more than probable, the secret hope of many more; and, secondly, on what other hypothesis could the Ghost have been introduced with equal effect? A mere shade or Eidolon were too weak a thing to bear the weighty office imposed on this awful visitation. Would men at any time have believed in the descent of an emancipated soul from heaven, to demand vengeance on a wretched body for sending it thither? Or could they have

sympathised in the wrongs of a "goblin damned?" Is not the desire of revenge, even upon an adulterous murderer, one of the imperfections—that must be "burned and purged away?" Yet, to Hamlet, a son and a mortal, what motive of revenge so mighty as the purgatorial pangs, the indefinitely protracted sufferings of a parent, whose virtues had entitled him to immediate bliss, had they not been taken in company with casual infirmity? He who believes a Purgatory, proportioned to the degree of sinfulness adhering to a soul endued with the principles of salvation, may take vengeance for the dead. We, rational Protestants, when we hang or shoot a murderer, only revenge, or, more properly speaking, defend ourselves.

Nothing in this mysterious history bears a stranger aspect than the inconsistent wildness of Hamlet's behaviour towards this same apparition. In its presence he displays the affectionate reverence of a son to his departed sire, of an earthly to a spiritual being; yet no sooner does the presence of human mortals break in upon him, than he treats the fearful vision with ludicrous irreverence—calls him (in his own hearing, be it remembered) "True-penny," "Fellow in the Cellarage," "Hic et ubique," "Old Mole." How is this to be explained? Is it mere buffoonery, foisted in to reward the gallery for silence? Is it an ordinary fetch of policy, to baffle the curiosity of his companions? Is it the prologue to the assumption of madness? or the true symptom of incipient derangement?

I never, to my knowledge, saw, or even fancied that I saw a ghost, much less the ghost of a murdered father; nor am I acquainted with any one that has; of course, therefore, I cannot tell how I or my friends would comport ourselves, either in the presence of a spirit, or immediately after its exit. But I shrewdly suspect, that our demeanour would be widely at variance with all established notions of propriety, decorum, and seriousness. Nay, from analogy, I conceive it probable, that the utter abeyance and confusion of all common forms and processes of understanding, the inadequacy of all human expressions of reverence, might find vent in something very like jocular defiance. Those who would profit by the experience of an old and able practitioner, may consult Luther's Table-Talk, in that passage (I cannot at present refer to it) where he details his usual method of receiving the visits of his Satanic majesty.

While the spirit is present, Hamlet's faculties are absorbed and concentred; his composing powers are suspended; he feels the reality of his moral relation to the incorporeal visitant, and is upheld by the consequent sense of moral obligation. Even after the "Adieu, adieu, adieu; remember me," his soul is still collected, and retained in unity with the one great object. The dire injunction fills up the total capacity of his being; it is to him the only truth; all else is vanity and phantasm—"saws of books and trivial fond records." He is still out of the body; earth glimmers away into non-existence; but the bare recollection, that there are other creatures—creatures

with whom he is newly placed in the relations of utter estrangement and irreconcilable enmity — occasions a partial revulsion; his human nature is resuscitated in an agony of wrathful scorn.

The sound of living voices, the sight of living bodies, farther remind him that he is in the flesh, but charged with a secret that must not be imparted, which alienates him from the very men, who, not one hour since, might have read his heart in the light of day, which turns his former confidents into intrusive spies. Hence the wild and whirling words—the half-ludicrous evasions—the struggle of his mind to resume its 'customed course, and affect a dominion over the awful shapes and sounds that have usurped its sovereignty. From this period, the whole state of Hamlet may aptly be likened to a vast black deep river, the surface whereof is curled and rippled by the passing breezes, and seemingly diverted into a hundred eddies, while the strong under-current, dark and changeless, maintains an unvaried course towards the ocean.

If it be asked, Is Hamlet really mad? Or for what purpose does he assume madness? We reply, that he assumes madness to conceal from himself and others his real distemper. Mad he certainly is not, in the sense that Lear and Ophelia are mad. Neither his sensitive organs, nor the operations of his intellect, are impaired. His mind is lord over itself, but it is not master of his will. The ebb and flow of his feelings are no longer obedient to calculable impulses —he is like a star, drawn by the approximation of a

comet, out of the range of solar influence. To be mad, is not to be subject to the common laws, whereby mankind are held together in community; and whatever part of man's nature is thus dissociated, is justly accounted insane. If a man see objects, or hear sounds, which others in the same situation cannot see or hear, and his mind and will assent to the illusion (for it is possible that the judgment may discredit the false intelligence which it receives from its spies), such man is properly said to be out of his senses, though his actions and conclusions, from his own peculiar perceptions, should be perfectly sane and rational. Hamlet's case is in some measure the reverse of this—his actions and practical conclusions are not consistent with the premises in his mind and his senses. An overwhelming motive produces inertness—he is blinded with excess of light.

The points in his character which have given occasion to most controversy, are his seemingly causeless aversion to Polonius; his cruel treatment of Ophelia; his sceptical views of an hereafter, spite of ocular demonstration that to die is not to sleep; his apparent treachery to his two schoolfellows, Rozencrantz and Guildenstern; and his tardy, irresolute, and at last casual, performance of the dread vow which he has invoked Heaven, Earth, and Hell to witness.

The character of Polonius, though far less abstruse and profound than that of Hamlet, has been far more grossly misrepresented—at least on the stage—where he is commonly exposed to the *gods* as a mere doodle, a drivelling caricature of methodical, prying, garrulous,

blear-eyed, avaricious dotage; in fact, as all that Hamlet, between real and counterfeit madness, describes him. A similar error has turned Othello, the sable Mauritanian chieftain, haply descended from the vanquishers of Roderic the Goth, into a rank woolly-pated, thick-lipped nigger, a protégé of the African Association. The Danish Chamberlain is indeed superannuated—a venerable ruin, haunted with the spectre of his departed abilities. But he has been already sufficiently vindicated by Dr. Johnson, who was seldom wrong, when acute observation of life and manners, unaided by extensive imagination, could set him right. Of Polonius, in his prime, it might be said, that "wisdom and cunning had their shares in him;" his honour and honesty were of the courtier's measure, more of the serpent than the dove. Even his advice to Laertes, which has sorely puzzled those who mistake him for an anile buffoon, is altogether worldly and prudential, such as a worldly-wise man might derive from the stores of experience, long after he had lost the power of applying his experience to passing occasions. A cautious wisdom, never supported by high, philosophic principles, has degenerated into circuitous craftiness. Witness his notable scheme of espionage upon his son's morals at Paris. He is, moreover, a member of the Academy of Compliments, a master of ceremonies, and evidently practised in the composition of set speeches and addresses, as his rhetorical formulæ and verbal criticisms sufficiently evince. "A foolish figure"—"A vile phrase"—"Beautified is an ill phrase"—"That 's good, mobled

queen is good." It would seem, too, that like some other great statesmen, he has dabbled in polite literature. How correctly he inventories the genera and species of the Drama—Tragedy, Comedy, Pastoral, Pastoral-comical, Historical-pastoral, Tragical-historical, Tragical-comical-historical-pastoral, Scene-undividable, or Poem-unlimited. Seneca cannot be too heavy, nor Plautus too light. For the "law of writ, and the liberty, these are the only men."

He much resembles an emeritus professor of legerdemain, who continues to repeat his sleight-of-hand tricks when gout or palsy has deprived his hands of the quickness necessary to deceive. He is a formalist in politics, a precisian in courtesy.

Between such a personage, and the moody, metaphysical, impatient, open-hearted Hamlet, there must needs have existed an utter antipathy; and though antipathy is not synonymous with hatred, it is on the high-way to it. Where natures are entirely discordant, small provocation suffices to produce personal hostility. Now, Polonius is the confidential agent and adviser of the usurping king, and may be supposed to have had a hand in diverting the course of succession. He is Ophelia's father, and, as such, has enjoined her to deny her company to Hamlet—prudently enough, no doubt, but paternal prudence seldom escapes the resentment of the disappointed lover. The plainest dictates of parental duty are ascribed to sordid and unworthy designs; and that the Danish Prince imputes such to Polonius, is manifest, from the ambiguous epithet, fishmonger, and

from his ironical admonition, "let her not walk in the sun," &c. But what is more than all, Polonius betrays his intention of pumping Hamlet; and the irritation naturally consequent on the discovery of such a purpose, is heightened by contempt for the manœuvring imbecility, the tedious periphrasis with which it is pursued, which renders age contemptible for its weakness, and odious for its indirection. It is not, therefore, unnatural—though certainly far from proper—that Hamlet should make the infirmities of the venerable lord a topic of reproach and ridicule; and that when, in a feverish flash of vigour, he has stabbed him like a rat behind the arras, he should vent his just anger against himself upon the victim of his rashness, whom he chooses to consider as the impediment to his just revenge; and, unable to speak seriously on what he cannot bear to think of, should continue to the carcass, the same strain of scornful irony wherewith he used to throw dust in the dim prying eyes of the living counsellor.

But, for wringing the kind, fond heart of sweet Ophelia, with words such as man should never speak to woman, what excuse, what explanation can be offered? Love, we know, is often tyrannous and rough, and too often tortures to death the affection it would rack into confession of itself; and men have been who would tear open the softest breast, for the satisfaction of finding their own names indelibly written on the heart within. But neither love, nor any other infirmity that flesh is heir to, can exempt the live dissection from the condemnation of inhu-

manity. Such experiments are more excusable in women, whose weakness, whose very virtue requires suspicion and strong assurance; but in man, they ever indicate a foul, a feeble, an unmanly mind. I never could forgive Posthumus for laying wagers on his wife's chastity. Of all Shakspeare's jealous husbands, he is the most disagreeable.

But, surely, the brave, the noble-minded, the philosophic Hamlet, could never be guilty of such cruel meanness. Nor would Shakspeare, who reverenced womanhood, have needlessly exposed Ophelia to insult, if some profound heart-truth were not developed in the exhibition. One truth at least it proves—the fatal danger of acting madness. Stammering and squinting are often caught by mimicry; and he who wilfully distorts his mind, for whatever purpose, may stamp its lineaments with irrecoverable deformity. To play the madman is "hypocrisy against the devil." Hamlet, in fact, through the whole drama, is perpetually sliding from his assumed wildness into sincere distraction. But his best excuse is to be found in the words of a poet, whom it scarce beseems me to praise, and who needs no praise of mine:—

> "For to be wroth with one we love,
> Doth work like madness in the brain."
>
> S. T. C.

Hamlet loved Ophelia in his happy youth, when all his thoughts were fair and sweet as she. But his father's death, his mother's frailty, have wrought sad alteration in his soul, and made the very form of

woman fearful and suspected. His best affections are blighted, and Ophelia's love, that young and tender flower, escapes not the general infection. Seemed not his mother kind, faithful, innocent? And was she not married to his uncle? But after the dread interview, the fatal injunction, he is a man among whose thoughts and purposes love cannot abide. He is a being severed from human hopes and joys—vowed and dedicated to other work than courtship and dalliance. The spirit that ordained him an avenger, forbad him to be a lover. Yet, with an inconstancy as natural as it is unreasonable, he clings to what he has renounced, and sorely feels the reluctant repulse which Ophelia's obedience presents to his lingering addresses. Lovers, even if they have seen no ghosts, and have no uncles to slay, when circumstances oblige them to discontinue their suit, can ill endure to be anticipated in the breach. It is a sorrow that cannot bear the slightest show of unkindness. Hamlet, moreover, though a tardy, is an impatient nature, that would feel uneasy under the common process of maidenly delay. Thus perplexed and stung, he rushes into Ophelia's chamber, and, in amazed silence, makes her the confidante of his grief and distraction, the cause of which she must not know. No wonder she concludes that he is mad for her love, and enters readily into what to her appears an innocent scheme to induce him to lighten his overcharged bosom, and ask of her the peace, which unasked she may not offer. She steals upon his solitude, while, weary of his unexecuted task, he argues with himself

the expediency of suicide. Surprised as with a sudden light, his first words are courteous and tender, till he begins to suspect that she too is set on to pluck out the heart of his mystery; and then, actually maddened by his self-imposed necessity of personating madness, he discharges upon her the bitterness of blasted love, the agony of a lover's anger, as if determined to extinguish in himself the last feeling that harmonised not with his fell purpose of revengeful justice. To me, this is the most terrifically affecting scene in Shakspeare. Neither Lear, nor Othello, are plunged so deep in the gulf of misery.

The famous soliloquy, which is thus painfully interrupted, has been murdered by its own celebrity. It has been so bespouted, bequoted, and beparodied—so defiled by infant reciters, and all manner of literary bores *vivâ voce* and in print—so cruelly torn from its vital connexion with its parent stock, that we are hardly conscious that it derives its sole sense and propriety from the person by whom, and the circumstances under which, it is spoken. Even when recited on the stage, we always feel as if Hamlet were repeating a speech, not uttering the unpremeditated discourse of his own divided thoughts. Strangely enough, it has been taken as a clerical diatribe against suicide, that might do honour to a pulpit, or chair of Moral Philosophy. Yet the scepticism which considers death as a sleep, futurity as a possible dream, and conscience as a coward, has not been wholly unobserved; and Shakspeare has been boldly accused of inadvertence in putting such doubts into the mouth

of one who had actually seen and conversed with a denizen "of that undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveller returns." Many insufficient solutions of this apparent contradiction have been proposed. Perhaps the most plausible is that which ascribes it to the uncertainty still existing in Hamlet's mind, whether the thing which he has seen is really his father's spirit, or only a diabolical illusion. But this explanation, though good as far as it goes, does not go far enough. I will not say, that an apparition might not confirm the faith of an hereafter where it pre-existed, but where that faith was not, or was neutralised by an inward misery, implicated with the very sense of being, its effect would be but momentary or occasional—a source of perplexity, not of conviction —throwing doubt at once on the conclusions of the understanding and the testimony of the senses, and fading itself into the twilight of uncertainty, making existence the mere shadow of a shade. Hamlet, in his first soliloquy, speaks like a Christian—an unhappy and mistrusting Christian indeed, but still a Christian who reveres the Almighty's "canon 'gainst self-slaughter." But now, when his belief has received that confirmation which might seem irrefragable, he talks like a speculative heathen, whose thoughts, floating without chart or compass on the ocean of eternity, present the fearful possibility of something after death, but under no distinct conception either of hope or of fear. The apparition has unsettled his original grounds of certainty, and established no new ones. Are there no analogous cases within the limit of

our own experience? Have not some half intuitions of metaphysical truths operated on certain minds, like the Ghost upon Hamlet's, to destroy the intelligible foundations of common-sense, and give nothing in their stead? to impair the efficiency of ordinary motives, yet supply none adequate either to overcome indolence or counteract impulse?

That the active powers of Hamlet are paralysed, he is himself abundantly conscious. Every appearance of energy in others—the histrionic passion of the player—the empty ambition of Fortinbras—the bravery of grief in Laertes, excite his emulation and his self-reproaches. Yet day after day—hour after hour, the execution of his vow is in his hand—no fear—no scruple seems to detain him; and yet, after the play has caught the conscience of the King, and every doubt of the Ghost's veracity is removed, the said Ghost upbraids his almost blunted purpose. The power of acting revisits him only at gusty intervals; and then his deeds are like startlings out of slumber, thrustings on of his destiny. In one of these fits he stabs Polonius; in another, he breaks open the commission of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, and without considering how far they might, or might not be, privy to his uncle's treachery, sends them by a forged instrument to the block. At last, when the envenomed rapier has wound up his own tragedy, he feels new strength in his mortal moment, and, in an instant, performs the work, and dies!

A CRITIQUE * ON RETZSCH'S ILLUSTRATIONS OF HAMLET.

NORTH.

Come, James, keep a good tongue in your head. See, here are Retzsch's Illustrations of Hamlet.

SHEPHERD.

Stop till I dicht the table wi' the rubber. Noo unfauld, and let 's hear till another lectur. Play awa' the first fiddle. You like to shine, even afore the Shepherd alane—and oh! but auld age is garrulous, garrulous, and loes dearly the soun' o' his ain tremblin' vice!

NORTH.

Here is the apotheosis of Shakspeare.

SHEPHERD.

I hate apotheoses's, for they 're no in natur, or hardly sae —but is there a pictur' o' the murder?

NORTH.

Here it is. The adulterous brother is pouring the "leperous distilment" into the ear of the sleeping monarch. What a model of a coward assassin! He seems as if he trod on a viper. He must needs have recourse to poison, for he dare not touch a dagger. Every nerve in his body is on the rack of fear, and yet no quiver of remorse can reach his dastard soul. The passage from sleep to death—how finely marked on the features of his victim! Life has departed without taking leave, and death has not yet stamped him with its loathsome impress. But the deed is done, and the "extravagant and erring spirit," with all its imperfections on its

* Extracted from the *Noctes Ambrosianæ*, No. XXXIX. It is a melancholy pleasure to the editor of these volumes to compare the language of Christopher North, respecting his brother, in 1828 and in 1850. At the latter date, he says, "I have only this day (Nov. 8) discovered, beyond the possibility of doubt, that the passage quoted in your letter is the product of dear Hartley's fine mind.—Dear Hartley! Yes, ever dear to me."

head, is already in Purgatory. What a placid beauty in the reclining attitude of the corpse! A graceful ease, which finely contrasts with the crouching curve of the villain. It is a posture which a lady on a sofa might study with advantage—yet manly, royal—in sleep—in death, he is "every inch a king."

SHEPHERD.

And the artist o' that is a German? I can hardly credit it.

NORTH.

The antique garniture of the Arbour—the Gothic fret-work—the grotesque imagery—the grim figure of Justice with her sword and scale—all seem to sympathise with the horrid act—and bear a charmed life, a reflection of sad mortality.

SHEPHERD.

Oh! sir! but Claudius is an ugly heathen.

NORTH.

Is he not, James—not indeed too bad a villain—but too low a scoundrel? He could not be the brother of a king—he could seduce no woman who was not degraded below all degradation—and the mother of Hamlet is still a queen. He is downright physically disgusting. Retzsch has embodied the grossest issues of Hamlet's hatred. He has combined in a human form the various deformities of a satyr, a drunkard, a paddock, a bat, a gib, a slave—and, altogether, has produced a true semblance of one of those hoary miscreants who are brought up to Bow Street or Marlborough Office for assaults upon female infants. His vile low forehead, whalley eyes, pendulous cheeks, and filthy he-goatish beard — foh — the nobles of Denmark would never have compounded felony with such "a cutpurse of the empire."

SHEPHERD.

But you'll find, sir, that Shakspeare's Claudius is really such a monster.

NORTH.

No, James—no.

SHEPHERD.

But Hamlet says sae——

NORTH.

No matter what Hamlet says. Hamlet utters his own

sentiments, not Shakspeare's — and hatred is twenty fold blinder than love. Now, I really think, that sensualist, adulterer, fratricide, and usurper as he is, Claudius has royal blood in his veins, and, for an usurper, plays the King's part rarely. Even the Ghost ascribes to him "witchcraft of wit;" and accordingly he is a fine talker, a florid rhetorical speaker, not unfurnished with common-places of morality, and thoroughly capable of sustaining his assumed dignity. His reproof of Hamlet's perseverent woe would have done credit to a better man.

"——— To persever
In obstinate condolement, is a course
Of impious stubbornness: 'tis unmanly grief:
It shows a will most incorrect to Heaven;
A heart *unfortified*, or mind impatient:
An understanding simple and unschool'd:
For what, we know, must be, and is as common
As any the most vulgar thing to sense,
Why should we, in our peevish opposition,
Take it to heart? Fie, 'tis a fault to Heaven,
A fault against the dead, a fault to nature,
To reason most absurd, whose common theme
Is—Death of Fathers!"

SHEPHERD.

That 's orthodox divinity, sure enough!

NORTH.

Nay, when his conscience will let him, he lacks not courage. When assailed by Laertes — he behaves like a prince and speaks like a Tory.

"Let him go, Gertrude; do not fear our person.
There 's such Divinity doth hedge a king,
That treason can but peep to what it would,
Acts little of his will."

SHEPHERD.

He may speak like a Tory—but he acts like a Whig.

NORTH.

Forgot party for a night, James. Shakspeare, in short, was aware, and here Retzsch seems to have forgotten, that great moral guilt may coexist with much personal or official dignity, and even with acute intellectual perceptions of right and wrong.

SHEPHERD.

Turn ower to the Ghost, sir—gin ye please.

"By Heaven, I 'll make a Ghost of him that lets me."

NORTH.

Lo! Young Hamlet, beckoned away by the Ghost, who stands in the distance, dim and shadowy, ghostly indeed and king-like too, is bursting from his friends, whose admonitory, dissuasive countenances interpret their fears. There is nothing of rage or violence, you see, James, in his deportment—nothing but the self-transcending energy of one, whose fate cries out. Never did art produce a finer sample of manly beauty in its vernal summer. We can see that his downy cheek is smooth and blooming as a virgin's; and yet he is the man complete—the soldier, scholar, courtier—the beloved of Ophelia—"the beautiful, the brave." Perhaps he is even too beautiful—not that he is effeminate—but the moody, moon-struck Hamlet must needs have had a darker and a heavier brow.

SHEPHERD.

Which is Horatio?

NORTH.

That. Horatio, here and throughout, is a sensible, gentlemanlike young man—and Marcellus a fair militia officer.

SHEPHERD.

Eh! here 's the soliloquy!

NORTH.

To say that it is a picture of Hamlet uttering that soliloquy, would be to attribute to the pencil a skill which it does not possess. But it is evidently the picture of a man speaking—reasoning to himself—a rare advantage over the generality of theatrical portraits, which generally stare out of the canvas or paper, just as if they were spouting to the pit, or familiarly eyeing the gallery. Hamlet stands in the centre—his body firm and erect, his head downcast, hands slightly raised. He is manifestly in a state of inward conflict, and strong mental exertion—not in a passive day-dream, or brown study. On the one side Ophelia sits sewing—her hands suspended, her countenance marked with affectionate anxiety. On the other, the King and Polonius, watching, one with malicious, the other with curious intentness. Retzsch has admirably

represented the popular idea of Polonius;—but when he visits England, he may perhaps find, among our venerable Nobles, a more adequate representative of the Polonius of Shakspeare.

SHEPHERD.

Was ye speakin' the noo, sir, for I didna hear your voice?

NORTH.

Beauty, Innocence, and Sorrow, each in their loveliest dress, unite in the simple figure. Most wonderful and excellent is the art, that with a few strokes of the pencil, can produce a being whom at once we know, and love, and pity. Hamlet, seated at her feet, his eye fixed like a Basilisk on the King, with uplifted finger, expounds "the Mouse Trap." —"He poisons him in the garden for his estate. You shall see anon, how the murderer gets the love of Gonzago's wife." The King, with averted face, draws back his chair, as in the act of rising.—The Queen, a royal matron, still noble and beautiful—though guilt, and care, and years, have set their several marks upon her,—holds up her hands in astonishment—but shows no fear.—She evidently was not privy to the murder. The rest of the audience are merely amazed, or it may be, chagrined at the interruption of their entertainment. Ophelia, pensive and heart-broken, yet thinking no evil, scarce perceives what is passing.

SHEPHERD.

Puir creter!

NORTH.

But, look here, my dear Shepherd—look here. The King is praying—no, pray he cannot—the picture tells it. We compassionate even this miscreant under the severest of all Heaven's judgments.—Not so does Hamlet. "Up, sword, and know thou a more horrid hent," is clearly blazoned in his own act and visage. That was one of the speeches which Shakspeare, had he lived in these days, would not have written—nor would he, in the golden days of Queen Bess, or King Jamie, have put into the mouth of Hamlet, had he meant to represent him as a sane and exemplary youth. Yet I know not whether the notion of retributive vengeance as a propitiation to the departed, will not justify even this horrid scruple. The speech, whatever it were meant for, certainly is a tremendous satire on revenge.

SHEPHERD.

It gars me grue and greet.

NORTH.

After the last confirmation of the king's guilt, Hamlet, fooled to the top of his bent by successive intruders, and screwing up his spirits for the interview with his mother, not only is, but confesses himself maddened.

"Now could I drink hot blood,
And do such business as the bitter day
Would quake to look on."

He even contemplates, while he deprecates, the possibility of his "heart losing its nature." Just then, "at the very witching time of night," "when hell itself breathes out contagion to this world," he crosses the chamber where the king is kneeling. The opportunity strikes him, but his natural disinclination to action intervenes, with somewhat of a secret consciousness, that the moment of repentance is not the time of vengeance. Still, so utterly are his feelings envenomed against the poor culprit, and so strangely his moral sense perplexed by "supernatural soliciting," that even remorse itself is turned to cruelty, and he vindicates the adjournment of the blow by arguments, which certainly "have no relish of salvation in them," but which, perhaps, sounded less impious in an age, when every stanch Protestant, no less than his Catholic cousin, thought himself bound to believe in the eternal perdition of their dissentient neighbours.

SHEPHERD.

I can look at it nae langer; turn ower, sir, turn ower to Ophelia!

NORTH.

Here it is,—the madness of Ophelia! She is still lovely —still the same Ophelia—but how changed! Her aspect tells of fierce conflicting woes—but they are passed. Surely that bereavement of reason, which to man appears so cruel, is a dispensation of mercy! She scatters her flowers—rue, for remembrance, and pansies for thoughts—and warbles snatches of old songs—such as she may have overheard in her childhood, without knowing what the words imply, only that they tell of love and death—of faithless love and death untimely!

IGNORAMUS ON THE FINE ARTS.

No. I.

"PAINTING is a mystery." Strange that an art, which addresses the most perfect of the senses, should not be plain as daylight. Yet the more pictures I see, the more I read and hear, and reflect about painters and their works, the more I am convinced that Pompey, the clown, is right in his observation. The more I seem to know, the nearer I approach the Socratic conviction "that I know nothing!"

I speak not of the mystery of making pictures, but of that which involves their merits and demerits when made. That there should be technical secrets, mysteries of the craft, is no more than might be expected. I can easily conceive that to paint air may be as difficult as to raise the wind, and that I never could do by whistling,—that middle tint, like other happy middles, is hard to hit, and harder to keep,—that a true carnation is as skilful a compound as a haggis,—that to group a picture successfully may be as delicate a concern as to marshal a country dance at a country assembly, (and that would puzzle a modern herald, or seneschal of the olden time),—

that the inner light of the Venetian colourists may be as unaccountable as the inward illumination of the elect, — nay, I apprehend and appreciate the science and dexterity which can distinguish a horse from a crocodile, and a tree from a birch-broom. As for chiaroscuro, tone, keeping, contour, repose, &c, they are words which I venerate and understand as well as your worthy præcentor doth Selah, Michtham, Negonoth, or Hallelujah. Yet I doubt not they have a meaning, as precise and categorical as the polarity of moral truth. Of the executive difficulties of art I may be allowed to judge,—inasmuch as, after many years' self-instruction, and six lessons from an itinerant drawing-master, I never could represent a joint-stool in just perspective, or delineate the correct profile of a gibbet. As for colouring, though I was early aware that light and shade in nature do not lie in jagged patches, like the skin of a spotted negro, nor resemble London snow, or a damsel in a white gown newly emerged from the embraces of a chimney-sweeper,—that Spring, the lightsome lassie, does not wear green grogram, nor Autumn invest her maturer charms in a red and yellow Manchester print,—I was totally unable to make any practical use of the knowledge, except indeed to convince myself that a precocious passion for pencils and colour-boxes is no infallible sign of a genius for the fine arts.

In truth, I am well contented to be ignorant of the mechanical arcana of art. Secrets of practice are profitable to none but practitioners. When I look on a fine picture, I would gladly forget the laborious,

greasy, dirty-handed process that produced so much beauty, and believe it a living emanation of the inspired intellect,—a magic mirror of the artist's mind. What youthful poet, wooing his Fancy's Queen with tender poesy, would choose to have her witness to "his poetic pains,"—the blots, the erasures, the gnawing of his pen,—his stolen glances at the rhyming dictionary,—his furtive forays into the "Elegant Extracts" and the "Beauties of the Living Poets?" What extempore preacher would expose his note-book to his congregation? For my own part, I like a good beef-steak, but have no desire to follow it from the stall to the gridiron. I dearly love a Christmas pantomime. Old Prynne and Jeremy Collier, if their hearts were in the right place, (and Jeremy was a sound non-juring Tory), would have uncursed the stage, had they seen the bliss of wonderment, the bright, round, rosy, innocent faces of the children, —the smug, rustic, half-childish delight of country cousins, and the glorious independence of the one shilling gallery, at these silent dramas. But I would not, like the gallants of Shakspeare's days, place my stool on the stage during the performance, for fear of slipping through a trap-door, nor venture behind the scenes, lest I should forget to give Columbine her title, or mistake some venerable Peer for Pantaloon.

But there is a mystery in art which I would fain dive into,—a mystery of grace, of grandeur, of harmony,—a power in lines and colours, which I cannot explain, and only half enjoy.

It never was my fortune to visit the foreign seats

of art; and my acquaintance with English collections is neither intimate nor extensive. Of course, therefore, my notions of the grand style are vague, metaphysical, or at least poetical; for engravings of epic or tragic pictures are as unsatisfactory as prose versions of epic poems. They show what the work is about, not what it is. The temples of Greece and Italy—sublime in desolation, lovely in widow's weeds—are to me unreal as the hidden bowers of Izem. I never trode the long galleries of the Escurial, where the Titians slumber in peaceful beauty, ripening with mellow years. The Louvre and the Luxembourg are hard words, which I dare not pronounce and scarce can spell. The Vatican, the Sistine Chapel, the Florentine Gallery, are fair imaginations, or rather indistinct yearnings, not so definite or vivid as the hall of Valhalla. Michael Angelo is like Demogorgon, an awful name, and that is all; Raphael, Titian, Salvator Rosa, I have heard and read of,—I believe in them, love them,—but what are they to me? Were Raphael's miracles of grace decayed, if nought remained to show where they had been but such quaint mockeries of shapes as mouldy damps describe on the walls of a deserted mansion, I could dream of him still,—still could I dream of faces whose beauty was no formal symmetry of outline, no bloom that Time bestows and takes away, but a permanent law and generative principle of loveliness, a visible efflux of divinity, still would I believe that what to me was but a dream, the fashion whereof I strove in vain to recal, was to Raphael a waking intuition,—a clear

idea, distinct in part and lineament, informing his skill and ruling his hand, and substantiated in his "human forms divine." Had Titian's colours been evanescent as the rainbow, I could yet believe (and alas! the time must come when none can more than believe it!) that his canvas glowed with the gorgeous light of prophetic vision, and melted with the voluptuous hues of lovers' fancy,—that he clothed his naked goddesses with beauty as a garment,—revealed young seraphs trailing clouds of glory, and shed immortal sunshine on Elysian plains. Salvator Rosa —never was man so blessed in a name!—But I once did see a landscape of Salvator's, which taught me what an imaginative thing a landscape may be, when drawn by a painter, not a land-surveyor; by a poet-painter,—not a mere portrait-maker of wood, earth, and water (Nature's three flat notes, as Sir William Chambers* called them, like a flat as he was). That shall positively be the last pun—this page. Such shaggy rocks,—such dark and ruinous caves,—such spectre-eyed, serpent-headed trees, wreathed and contorted into hideous mimicry of human shape, as if by the struggles of evil spirits incarcerated in their trunks,—such horrid depth of

* See the "Heroic Epistle," attributed to Mason, one of the most vigorous satires of latter times. One should hardly have expected it from so grave and reverend a gentleman. Yet who more grave and proper than Virgil, and he has displayed a strong satiric vein in more than one passage.

"Qui Bavium non odit—amet tua carmina, Mævi,"

is worth a wilderness of Baviads and Mæviads. Gray, too, precise as he was, could wield the knout with a knowing spirit. See his lines upon "Tophet."

shade,—such fearful visitations of strange light,—such horrid likenesses

> "Of all the misshaped half-human thoughts
> That solitary nature feeds,"

were surely never congregated in any local spot,—assuredly not in merry England, nor Scotland either, for Robin Hood and "brave Rob Roy" were outlaws of another vein than Salvator's banditti, who seem not men of women born, nor fed with mother's milk, "nor ever dandled on a father's knee," but natural kindred of the murderous woods and unholy dens they lurk in. They are no more sib to the free dwellers of Sherwood than to the gentlemen of the Beggar's Opera. And then, such women! horribly beautiful! It is pleasant to talk of Correggio, Caravaggio, Julio Romano, Carlo Dolci, Domenichino, Parmegiano, and the rest of the Roman, Venetian, and Bolognese schools, their names are so musical. I have a superstitious reverence for Albert Durer,—a sort of bowing and speaking acquaintance with Teniers. I should like to be introduced to that pleasant good-for-nothing Frenchman, Watteau,—his pictures are such smooth, well-bred pieces of court scandal, as good as Grammont or Horace Walpole. I often quote Thomson's lines about "learned Poussin," and am heartily tired of hearing English sun-sets always called Claude-like scenes. As for Beck, Bolswort, Bischop, Sceldt, Rottenhammer, Heere, Helmskirk, Hondekotter, Hoskins, Howbraken, Ketel, Ralf, Cock, Block, Mengs, and Hink, I perfectly abhor

their names, and am determined never to mention them in a sonnet as long as I live.

With respect to sculpture, my faith is great and my knowledge very small. It is, however, much easier to conceive a statue than a painting, because the relation of parts to the whole is much simpler, and more obvious. Casts and prints give a very tolerable idea of what sort of excellence can be attained in marble or bronze. I have seen a copy of the Medicean Venus, and thought it an exceedingly clever model of a pretty loveable little woman. But I was neither "dazzled" nor "drunk with beauty," and must be excused if I doubt whether Byron was either. In "Don Juan" he speaks out, sensibly and plainly:—

> "I've seen much finer women, ripe and real,
> Than all the nonsense of their stone ideal."

"Loving in stone" must needs be platonic love with a vengeance. Venus and common sense defend me from falling in love with a statue, either literal or metaphorical! In soft, fascinating, sexual loveliness, marble is a very inadequate representative of flesh and blood; and in bodying forth the beauties of the feeling, the inexplicable combinations of thought and mind, sculpture is almost as inferior to painting, as painting to poetry,—all are poor in comparison of nature, who is fine poetry. Still the Venus de Medici is all it can, or ought to be: it is more glorious to have given a title to such a work, than to have reigned over the vale of Arno. There is ano-

ther Venus, known by the untranslatable epithet Kallipyga, which I have also seen in little, concerning which I shall borrow the rapture of that amiable cockney, Janus Weathercock, whilom connoisseur in ordinary to that dear defunct—the London—(Taylor and Hessey.) "Where shall we find a light sufficiently pervading for my exquisite coquette, my alluring bashfulness, that with such ravishing affectation, gathers sidelong the thin robes high from her blooming limbs long stepping—

'Thou beautcous-ankled, nameless one, what country gave thee birth?
Who was the god, or god-like youth, made blessed with thy love?
What thrilling fingers
Drew o'er the rounded wrist the elastic ring of gold?'

Is nature now worn out? Or wert thou always as now, a vision of desire, the flower of a mind burning with the idea of beauty never to be realised, but by its own faint reflection?"

Well done—now were I to try all night, I could not put myself into such an ecstasy. It is a very pretty figure, however, but my frigid barbarism has been far more affected by the sight of a rosy Westmoreland lassie, tripping over a swollen brook, with her basket on her head, looking behind and around her, to see if she were unobserved, and bursting into a half-pleased, half-alarmed laugh at the rustle of the copse hard by, than with any dim reflections of even Greek ideas. There is, methinks, a pravity of taste, a positive moral disproportion, in lavishing

so much fond foolishness on an unsympathising block, a toy of mere mechanic craft. The legitimate pleasure to be derived from works of art is calm, austere, intellectual. The true object of admiration is the intellect, that can so enshrine itself in passive matter, and fix a thought for perpetuity, awake the sense of beauty in a thousand minds through countless generations, and make us venerate the godlike in our possible selves.*

I confess I suspect the Apollo to be of a higher style of excellence than even the Venus; perhaps because Milman's prize verses have taught me how to admire it. But is not masculine beauty more truly statuesque, more coldly and correctly ideal than the charm of womanhood? It addresses itself purely to the understanding, through the eye; it is a matter of measurement—a geometric diagram. Theory and Nature are not there at strife. Men, to be sure, such as one sees of a market-day, or in the Serpentine river on a Sunday, are not Apollos; their visage must be seen in their mind before they can be loved;

* Since writing the above I have seen another Venus, a copy from the antique, in the most immaculate marble. It is a crouching figure, supported on one knee, with exquisite gracefulness, half concealing the face and bosom with the round flexile arms. The face, as usual in Grecian statues, has little expression. It is not the crafty laughter-loving goddess of wiles and witcheries, but Aphrodite, fresh from the pure ocean, a being mature in beauty, with the soul of new-born infancy, simply conscious of its own sweet life, and the light of Heaven. It has not the holiness of Eve, but scarce less innocence. The man who could be offended at its nudity, must have the imagination of a monk or a French atheist, and should read none but the Family Dramatists. I should not like to see a lady looking grave at it. It is as fine an illustration of the infinite unity of beauty as ever I saw in art. You cannot point out *where* a single line begins or ends. It is the property of James Branker, Esq., a worthy citizen of a state whose "merchants are princes," who will make Winander merry and musical as in days of yore.

but this is all to the advantage of the sculptor. His work is the less liable to suffer from a comparison with Nature's. At any rate, I have seen much sweeter women than the Venus—I never saw a man half so handsome as the Apollo. One great merit of this statue is, that it is not effeminate. With all the showy luxuriance of unshorn locks, the smooth and radiant aspect, the rounded limbs, that lead the eye unchecked along the undulating maze of beauty —it is every inch a god, instinct with immortal youth and masculine divinity. Now, common-place artists, and poets too, seem to copy the modern practice of the theatres—when they want to show a nice young man, they put a buxom female into male attire. Who, that ever has seen, can forget the Vestris in Giovanni? And more than one pretty little lady has made her musical début in Macheath. To see how the dear creatures play with the pistols! It were a pleasure to be robbed by such highway-women. However, the device serves to unrealise the play, which, delightful as its just and powerful satire makes its perusal, is a great deal too real for decorous representation. By the way, the Beggar's Opera is far above the customary pitch of Gay—Swift had surely a hand in it. But this is digressing.

The Farnese Hercules—a huge mass of muscle, sullenly reclining on a knotty club—is a terrible personification of animal power; a sort of animated oak tree. Nothing, compact of bone and fibre, could withstand the explosive force of its sinews: yet it is as sluggish, and apparently as unthinking, as powder

in a mine, before the train is ignited. It is said to be admirable in its anatomy; and being a genuine antique, is free from that disgusting pedantry which some modern muscle-mongers have brought from the dissecting-room, a school in which it is as vain to seek for the grace of the body, as for the seat of the soul. Better that a statue should not be quite correct in anatomy, than that it should look like a mummy, and smell of putrefaction. Let the surgeons make casts and preparations for themselves. Contrasted with the Apollo, this gnarled protuberant heap of iron flesh happily illustrates the difference between corporeal strength and spiritual energy—between Charles and Orlando. Still it is an ugly monster; and I like it the worse because I wrote fifty lines in its praise, which did not obtain the Newdigate prize.*

* Considering the circulation of Maga, not only in every part of the British dominions but in the United States, and wherever the English language is spoken, (to say nothing of the German, Swedish, and Sclavonic versions,) it is possible that some of her readers may not know what the Newdigate prize is. Sir Roger Newdigate, a wealthy nabob, bequeathed 20*l.* per annum for ever to the University of Oxford, for the best copy of verses, not exceeding fifty lines, on some subject of ancient painting, sculpture, or architecture. Professor Wilson was the first winner, and he has been followed by Milman, Chinnery, and others of minor note; for a University which is continually stocking the country with scholars and divines, cannot be expected to produce a great poet every year.

Not for so vain and impertinent a purpose as to arraign the decision of the Vice-Chancellor, both the Proctors, the Poetry Professor, and Public Orator in my own case, but simply to warn future aspirants against injudicious borrowing from the ancients, I mention a little circumstance attending my lines on the Farnese Hercules. Speaking of the protuberance of the muscles, I wrote as follows :—

> "Those starting sinews which thick-ranged appear,
> Like the broad pebbles in a river clear."

This couplet excited considerable ridicule, was pronounced "Inkish," (a term as opprobrious at Oxford, in respect to poetry, as Whiggish

I have gazed for hours at the Elgin marbles, "the importation whereof constitutes an era in British art," and having read in Hogarth's "Analysis" that Michael Angelo discovered the line of beauty in a Torso, was not without hopes of eliciting a theory from the headless Ilissus; while in the Theseus, whose features have not suffered much more punishment than would have befallen a successful pugilist in the best days of the prize-ring, I fain would have imagined an Olympic victor, reposing after the strife of the cæstus, only there were no marks of body blows. I conjured up a legion of fancies, each attended with a note of admiration for its squire,—

applied to politics,) and, as my flatterers insinuated, caused the rejection of my fifty lines. Now, in fact, the obnoxious simile originated not on the banks of the Winander or Derwent, but by the classic fount of Arethusa. In Theocritus's description of the Athlete Amycus, Idyll 22, we read thus:—

> "Στέθια δ' ἰσχαίρωντο στιλάρια, καὶ πλατὺ νῶτον,
> Σαρκὶ σιδαρείᾳ σφυρήλατος οἷα πολοσσός·
> Ἐν δὲ μύας στερεοῖσι βραχίοσιν ἄκρον ὑπ' ὦμον
> Ἔστασαν, ἠΰτε πίτρες ὁλοίτροχοι οὔσαι κυλίνδως
> Χειμάρρους σπάσμος μεγάλαις στειρίξισι δίναις."

Literally, "His breasts enormous, and expansive back, were covered with iron flesh—as a colossus fashioned with the hammer; and in his stalwart arms, beneath his shoulders' tip, the muscles stood, like round rolling stones which a river, swollen with winter rains, tumbles along with it and boils in mighty eddies." On which passage Coplestone ("Prælectiones Academicæ," p. 79) observes, "Amyci Athletæ forma ad exemplum statuæ alicujus insignis aut tabulæ videtur exprimi;" perhaps, if chronology permit, Theocritus might be thinking of the Farnese Hercules at the very time. I hate chronology, and love Shakspeare for his anachronisms as much as for his puns. Seriously, I mean not to murmur at the criticisms of my academical superiors or contemporaries. There is an idle fashion of disparaging prize poems, as if the tamest, tritest compositions had the best chance of success—as if Heber's "Palestine" had not been a prize poem—as if Porteus, and Louth, and Wilson had not been prize men. It is neither likely nor fit that academic judges should authorise daring innovations on established models, or encourage the audacity of empiric genius. Nor does English poetry properly belong to the course of college studies. I am not sure that prizes for

outline ecstasies, raptures in chiaroscuro—but it would not do. In vain I culled the finest words in English, Greek, Latin, French, and what Italian I had picked out of music-books, and tried to talk myself into a taste, by explaining their superlative excellence to whomsoever I could get to seem to listen. I was as cold as the marbles themselves; and all my imaginations were like the silent practice in which a cathedral organist exercises his fingers during the lessons and sermon, which only wants the puff of the bellows to be eloquent music. I tried the antiquarian tack—bethought me how these shattered relics grew beneath the hand of Phidias—

English verse are necessary or advantageous in an university at all. They certainly withdraw the attention from the regular course of studies, and sometimes gain a temporary éclat for clever idle men, which is not desirable. Surely, then, the rulers of public instruction are right in patronising that cast of poetry which is most strictly academical—which indicates most care, study, and self-possession—though it should not always be the most promising. Whatever political economists may think of bounties upon exportation, bounties upon genius are little needed in this generation. After all, of the number of rejected prize poems which their authors have thought proper to print, is there one which does not justify the award of the Dons?

Talking of lakishness, the Southerns, and some of you Northerns too, have a strange idea of the lakes—as if they constituted a sort of rural Grub-street—as if rhyme, rhythm, blank verse, and English hexameter were the vernacular dialect of the hills—as if Windermere were a huge puddle of ink, and the wild geese, when they fly over our vales, dropped ready-made pens out of their pinions. *Tout au contraire*, I assure you, gentlemen. The Lake Poets are aliens to a man; they brought their disease with them, and not a single native has caught the infection.

I cannot conclude this inordinately egotistical note without a word of just praise to the excellent work I have quoted in my own justification; but perhaps it is enough to say that it is the work of Coplestone. Whoever would form a right judgment of the characteristic excellence of ancient poetry, unbiassed by mere veneration for ancient names, will find himself improved by its perusal. It is to be regretted that the rules of his office (that of Poetry Professor) prevented his illustrating his position by the collation of modern examples with the antique prototypes. But English was to him a forbidden speech, and French, Spanish, German, Italian, unholy as wizard's spells.

how joyously he marked the approximation of the rude block to his preconceived idea—how quickly and thankfully he availed himself of every hint which the grain of the marble, a slip of the chisel, any passing object or accident, suggested to his quick-conceiving fancy—how Pericles, Sophocles, Socrates, watched his progress, and young Plato stood by musing on the quiddity of the Καλὸν—how often he was interrupted by the freaks of that mischievous urchin Alcibiades—and how divinely drunk the whole city of Athens got at the house-warming of the Parthenon, anticipating the Dionysia, and seeing every grace and perfection of the consummate divinities double. I wonder whether a drunk Athenian was as asinine as a drunk Englishman—how many generations of fair and wise and wicked citizens gazed upon them—on those very statues then before me, till they became like the dim blue Hymettus, and the dark blue sea, the natural inheritance of Athenian eyes, the pride of Athenian prosperity, the prouder solace of Athens in decay. But this also was vanity, and worse—it was a sore vexation. Better that Britain had remained, as in the days of Chaucer, of Spenser, even of Milton, a land where thought alone reflected or consummated the beauty of nature, than that we should learn the mechanism and trick of the cunning artificer, by plundering the helpless and the fallen. If it please Heaven that we should have painters and sculptors, they will rise in due time; and the same power that made Homer a poet, without antique models,—that in every art has made the makers of

models with no model but Nature, will teach our artists to realise their own ideal, and to equal, not resemble, the masters of brighter climes and ages of historic fame. The Elgin marbles may make sculptors of lads who ought to be carpenters—they may possibly humanise the bodiless cherubs on our churchyard stones; but they will not conjure the soul of Phidias into John Bull. The coward Philistine, who bribed a harlot to deprive Samson of his strength, was none the stronger for his treachery.

Such were my reflections in the year 18—, when I last visited the British Museum. If I erred, at least I erred in good company; for the Duke of Wellington, who restored the works of art to Italy, and Felicia Hemans, who sang so sweet a song of triumph for their return, were manifestly of my opinion. Lord Byron's maledictions on "the scoundrel Scot," are too well known to be quoted, and far too anti-patriotic to be quoted in this Magazine.* Let us rather suppose, that Lord Elgin was incited, like Brutus, by the love of his country—by pure love of the arts, like the man that stole the sacramental plate out of pure religion, because he did not approve of the churchwardens. No more, probably, does Lord Elgin of the modern Athenians; he thought, perhaps, that statues were of no more use to them than books to a man who cannot read—that Britain is now the true Greece, and London "the city of the soul." At any rate, he bought the statues and paid for them, and sold them again at a loss; and were I a sculptor,

* Blackwood's, in which this Essay was originally published.

the chance is, that I should feel truly grateful to him. As it is, I do not think I will vote for sending them back,—at least, till the Government of Greece is settled on a firm basis. Is it not enough that we were willing to have given the Greeks a king, if we could have found anybody to accept the honour? Alas! they are much in the situation of the trees in Jotham's parable, and I fear the thorn will reign over them at last.

"To fall to somewhat of a slower method," as King Dick says, it must be allowed that pictures and statues lose some portion of their sentimental interest, though not of their intrinsic worth, by expatriation. It is, moreover, an injury to the mighty dead—to the memory of their authors, who bequeathed them to their countries for an everlasting possession. Poetry floats on the wind, it is as communicable as fire, and all are gainers by its diffusion. But the genius of the painter, the sculptor, the architect, is embodied in matter circumscribed by locality. The temple must stand or fall beneath the same point of heaven that shone propitious on its erection. The picture, the carved image, though in some sort appertaining to the universal intellect, do yet partake of the nature of property,—of national property; and though it may plausibly be argued that the fee-simple ought to reside in the nation that can make the best use of them,—such a line of reasoning would prove too much—at least, for the security of vested interests in general. What would the courts think, if it were advanced as a plea for appropriating another man's horse, that the said owner was a bad jockey?

There is one purpose to which sculpture has immemorially been applied—wherein, I think, Gothic ignorance has stumbled on the right way, and modern skill "overleaps itself." I mean in sepulchral effigies. The old recumbent figures, with hands joined over the bosom, as if they had died praying, with the quaint black-letter inscriptions, accord far better with the repose of death, than the most artful imitation of life which even a Chantrey would execute. Death will still be death, and the bare skull will look ghastly, though you crown it with roses. Faith makes our departure joyful; but the best that sense can show of death is peace—marble stillness. Unseemly is the cold unmoving mimicry of life, in the holy neighbourhood of dust that hath lived.

But why did I speak of British art as of an unborn contingency? Ages rolled away before a real painter stepped on British ground; and long after England became a resort of foreign artists, and a shrine for their choicest relics, when poets and sages had consecrated our language to immortality, the silent universal language of lines and colours was graced with no English composition above the grade of a plain prose epitaph or obituary notice! For to what else can a mere portrait or death-like bust be compared? But art, though late, has come to us at last, and, like a Lapland summer, fairer and more perfect for its long delay.

Why were we not earlier blessed with native artists? Many reasons have been assigned, but none completely satisfactory. Winkelmann wrote an essay,

which Barry thought worthy of serious confutation, to show that, unless England could be towed some degrees farther south, her sons must toil after the classic style in vain. But Winkelmann, I believe, was never in England, perhaps never saw an English woman,—or, more probably, saw no beauty in the works of nature, and only one kind of beauty in works of design. Besides, he died in 1768. Yet, if he were acquainted with English literature and English mechanism, he ought to have known that we possessed, in no stinted measure, the two grand requisites of art—poetical conception, and manual dexterity. The fault, therefore, is not in our climate, bad as it is for asthmatical and consumptive subjects; not in our stars, or in our physical constitution, or craniological conformation—for all these are much *in statu quo*;—yet England is pre-eminently the country of living Art. Wars and factions are very wicked things; but it is doubtful whether they do not rather foster than repress the growth of intellect. Invention is a tree that droops in the sunshine, and expands its proud blossoms to the storm. What have been the times, and what the regions, which science, art, imagination, have most renowned? The eras of revolution, the habitations of discord—Athens, Syracuse, republican and papal Rome, Florence, Venice, Northern Germany, England—names habitually associated with sedition, persecution, tumults, battles, and sieges. And what periods in the world's history have produced more intellectual excellence, more ornamental skill, than those of the Peloponnesian war, of

the Roman triumvirates, when the minds which adorned the Augustan age were formed and instructed—of the Guelph and Ghibelline contests—of the Reformation, the puritan rebellion, and the French revolution?

But it may be argued—the fine arts of painting and sculpture are less independent than their sisters. They require an expensive material, and much leisure, and ample space, to develope their beauties. The minstrel could convey his harp, the modern bard his ink-horn, from town to town—over hill and dale;—could exercise their faculties beneath the green forest, in the camp or the prison, wherever the vocal air or the silence of thought can enter—needing no patronage but what suffices to preserve them from starving.

Not so the poet of the pencil or the chisel. This is an undertaking that requires capital. His employers can only be the opulent; and they are little disposed to purchase pictures or statues, which an invader may carry away to grace his triumph, a bullet pierce or a bomb-shell crush to atoms, a drunken mob deface or a fanatic multitude burn with the mass of abominable things. Nor are men's minds, in troubled times, much given to produce quiet grace, or silent expression, by slow and patient touches. David himself had little leisure for painting while he sat upon Robespierre's committee. There is some plausibility in this; but it will not account for the dearth of art in England. It is sufficient to observe, that there was room, leisure, and magnificence to erect some of

the grandest works of architecture, — the slowest, bulkiest, and most expensive of all arts' operations,— the least capable of escape, and the most exposed to hostile aggression. For never since the temple was levelled on Mount Moriah has the patient toil and beautiful genius of mankind upreared a house of prayer so reverend, so fitted to a sacred purpose, so fair with the beauty of holiness, as those aged cathedrals, those abbeys and minsters, which solemnise our ancient cities, or lift their grey heads, amid the stillness of deep, umbrageous, winding vales by lulling streams, or dark embowered with "old contemporary trees," from whence, in elder times, the sacred bell and the slow midnight psalm fell sweetly on the ear of wood-bewildered pilgrims, — fabrics so admirable in their perfection, that we could scarce deem charitably of their destroyers, were they less holy in their hallowed ruins. Yet even were they deprived of the sublimity of age and association, and considered merely as efforts of architectural skill, they would still be the glory of our isle. To execute so great a variety of minute and curious parts requires a masterly hand and a pregnant fancy,—to combine them in one massy and stupendous whole was the achievement of a mighty imagination. In the multitude of a mighty and delicate elaboration of the Gothic ornaments, we are reminded of the fragile pencilling of frost, or the vegetation of mosses; yet the total effect is immensity and eternity. We scarce believe them feats of mechanic agency, or think a time has been when yet they were not. We

are always pleased with the discovery of analogies between the sister arts; but the only thing to which we can assimilate or parallel the British sacred architecture is the music of Handel. The Grecian orders, like pictures, are to be seen and comprehended at once,—the whole and the parts are viewed together, and their co-inherence is judged by the eye. But our cathedrals, from their screens, side aisles, transepts, and subsidiary chapels, can never be seen altogether; there is always, as when you are listening to a solemn, rich, and varied harmony, employment at once for memory and anticipation. The whole is not *objected* to the senses, but must be constructed by the imagination,—always implied, but never present.

Now, the music of Handel, though multitudinous as the ocean, possesses as complete an unity as the simplest air, with the high excellence, that each part is prophetic, as it were, of the parts that are successively to be unfolded. But I am afraid I don't make myself quite understood. *Revenons à nos moutons.*

Surely the wealthy zeal and genius that erected those sacred fanes, might have adorned them with semblances of natural or ideal beauty, at less expense than went to fill them with gilded monsters and gorgeous deformity. There was plenty of occupation, and probably sufficient pay, for carvers and limners, when our churches were populous with idols, gleaming with saints, burning with martyrs, grinning with devils, and staring with miracles. The shafted windows, so curiously elegant with wire-like tracery, shed "dim religious light" through prophets and apostles,

radiant with gold and purple, sapphire and emerald; heraldic griffins and monsters stained the lettered pavement with transmitted lustre; the clustering pillars were hung with festal array of legends woven in tapestry, and not a font nor altar, stall or pulpit, screen or "buttress, or coigne of vantage," that was not as industriously flourished over as an Oriental manuscript. Grotesque and graceless as all this "antique imagerie" would probably appear in Protestant daylight, it doubtless was fearfully impressive in Catholic eyes, when seen by the faint flickering of yellow tapers, which, struggling with the discoloured gleam of painted glass, produce by their very number an aggravating indistinctness. The colouring was brilliant and expensive, and profusely bestowed on the statues, busts, and rilievos, after the Grecian fashion. If we may judge from the few remnants of church-limnery that have escaped the fanatics and the modernisers, there was no lack of manual cleverness or inventive ingenuity about the idol-makers. They wanted not hands or wits to have done better. And if, as is most probable, they were monks and ecclesiastics, they must many of them have visited Italy, and seen the antique. But they seem not to have aimed at grace or beauty. Scientific composition of course was out of the question. All they attempted they did well, and that was to dazzle the eye and tell their story. Single figures are sometimes powerfully designed; the features, though harsh, expressive, and the attitudes, though anything but elegant, and not always possible, are not without a purpose,—they do

help to tell a tale. All is hard, awkward, quaint, exaggerated; but nothing unmeaning. Their ends were wonder and faith,—and doubtless they worked well. In style, merit, and purpose, the religious paintings of the dark ages closely resembled the wood prints to be found in popular Dutch, German, and English books of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries,—such as "Quarles's Emblems," the "Book of Martyrs," the "Nuremberg Chronicle," "Reynard the Fox," and others, which have perhaps given more pleasure, certainly have pleased a greater number, than the finest productions of Italian genius.

Antiquarians may lament the destruction of carved virgins, and legends gay with gold and purple; but the loss is not to art, but to history. Whatever cleverness may have been in the contrivance or execution of these things—and there was no little—they involved not the idea of legitimate art, and therefore contained no germ of improvement. Had the skill that wrought them been cultivated to the exactest nicety, it could never have excelled the indefatigable idleness of a Chinese toy-maker. Still they prove that it was not for want of pay or patronage that England was not as early a land of painters as of poets.

Most nations exhibit the rudiments of design,—all appear to be delighted with gaudy colours. Savages of every tribe and climate paint their huts, their canoes, their weapons, or their skins. Such as are a little raised above animal life discover the instinct of imitation, are amused with casual resem-

blances of dissimilar objects, and set about producing them. If a stump of wood or fragment of shattered rock present a hideous similitude to human forms or features, the likeness is helped out with a few finishing touches, and lo! it is a god. Children have almost invariably a turn for drawing and colouring, as the fly-leaves of their copies, the whitewashed walls of the nursery, and many a poor print defaced with lake, gamboge, and ochre, abundantly testify. But notwithstanding the universality of these graphic impulses, it is to the especial endowments of a few—it may be of a single soul—that all the genuine art on earth is owing. To a few—a very few—has the good seed been entrusted. When once that seed is sown, it has seldom perished for want of fostering hands, or withered in the blasts of stormy politics. It sends its roots far away under the earth, and grows up, in many a goodly grove, with flowers of divers hue and fruits of various savour.

In a word, I conceive the reason why we had not a school of art before the days of Hogarth and Reynolds to be, that it had not pleased Heaven to send us any one great master. Our want of ancient models prevented talent from developing itself, but it will not account for the absence of genius; and where that is not, to erect academies, and propose prizes, is as vain as to water a garden wherein nothing is planted, or to set up burning-glasses and reflectors where the sun has never shone. True—the painter has a mechanical craft to learn, and is dependent on mechanic, scientific, and chemical inventions, for the

full display of his powers; but these appliances and means were as cheap—these menial faculties as easy to be hired—in England as elsewhere. But our day was not come. Let us be thankful that it has come at last.

In the age of Dryden, a list of native artists had been but an inventory of poverty, like the schedule of an insolvent—a catalogue of the illustrious obscure. Now we have already three volumes of the "Lives of British Painters, Sculptors, and Architects," from the pen of Allan Cunningham, and hope to have more.

It was once my intention to have launched a criticism on this delightful little book, under the colours of Christopher North. Little imports it to the world to know what contrary winds, what blockade or embargo has so long detained my reviewatory bark from sailing. But, alas! *sero nunquam* is not the motto of my muse. The very morning that I put the finishing touch to my long-promised prologue to my friend ——'s farce, I received intelligence that the farce was damned. The consolatory exhortation, which I culled with such care from the fathers and philosophers, and addressed to the young and wealthy widow, was all but finished when she married her second husband. Now a review is not one of those compositions which Horace counsels to be kept nine years. It is very well upon a work, which either ought, or ought not to be read; but very absurd on one which nobody will read, or everybody has read. In the latter case, if it be good for any-

thing, it ceases to be a review, and becomes a commentary, as the best possible dinner, if deferred to the eleventh hour, could only be a good supper. As a commentator, then, I proceed to communicate such reflections as Mr. Cunningham's work has suggested to me; to which I am the rather encouraged, inasmuch as he appears, from choice and judgment, as I from ignorance and necessity, rather to appreciate the intellectual than the technical, the poetic power than the executive mastery of art. He considers form and colour rather as exponents of thought than as capable of distinct and final excellence, and treats his subject less like an artist than a philosopher. It is, indeed, to be regretted, that he so seldom ventures upon the critic's ground; and is for the most part contented to be the biographer of artists, when he appears so fully qualified to be the historian of art. But, dearest Kit, let the First Part of the article of "Ignoramus" conclude here—and the second illumine the March Number.

IGNORAMUS ON THE FINE ARTS.

No. II.

WE now return in our ignorance to the exposition of the Fine Arts of old in England.

Of ancient English painting our friend Allan gives a rapid and vigorous sketch; scanty enough, indeed, but *ex nihilo nihil fit.* The shallow rill was lost in desert sands, and the true fountain of British Art arose in the eighteenth century. Whatever may be decided as to the authenticity of Ossian or Taliessin, they certainly were not the fathers of modern British verse.

Religious painting of some sort or other was introduced by St. Benedict Bisiob, the friend and early preceptor of the venerable Bede, whose history you have read in Southey's Vindiciæ Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ, or if not, pray do. He ornamented the church of Wearmouth with the Visions of the Apocalypse. It would be curious, if it were possible, to compare those said Visions at Wearmouth with Mr. West's Death on the Pale Horse, and other pieces taken from the same mysterious source in later times, all of which, whatever their historical merits, seem to fall into the same error of presenting simultaneously objects which

the Prophet must have seen in succession. But it is quite impossible to paint a Vision, far more to convey to waking uninspired sense the power and import of a Prophet's vision. The best that can be achieved in that kind is as impotent as the black pages in Tristram Shandy to pourtray primeval darkness. Of St. Benedict, however, Mr. Cunningham says nothing, but begins his survey with Henry the Third, a timid and pious king, who founded many cathedrals, and enriched them with sculpture and painting, to an extent and with a skill that merited the commendation of Flaxman. The royal instructions of 1233 are curious, and inform us of the character of art at that remote period, and of the subordinate condition of its professors. In Italy, indeed, as well as in England, an artist was then, and long after, considered as a mere mechanic. He was commonly at once a carver of wood, a maker of figures, a house and heraldry painter, a carpenter, an upholsterer, and a mason; and sometimes, over and above all this, he was a tailor. This seems to surprise and offend Allan; but, for my part, I am so far from wondering that artists were tailors in the fourteenth century, that I regret that tailors are not artists in the nineteenth, and fearlessly affirm that no human being is fit to be tailor, mantua-maker, milliner, corset-maker, coiffeur, or even so much as to dress his own hair, who has not a taste for the arts of design. Are not the greatest masters almost as much celebrated for their draperies as for their nudes? Does not the tailor, as well as the artist, require much knowledge of colour,

much skill of hand, much experience in human character, an acquaintance with anatomy, a smattering of geometry, a fine sense of beauty, and adroitness at flattery, a nice observance of complexions, dexterity in concealing the defects of nature, and the talent of displaying and imitating her perfections? Does not a comely costume require a variety of parts, a unity in the whole, a harmony of colours, a tone, a fitness, a just magnitude, a proportion, a characteristic expression, suited to the age, country, profession, aspect, height, and manner of the wearer? If Albert Durer drew mathematically, and published a book of proportions for the instruction of his trade—our modern *costumiers* take measure by algebra, and cut out by diagrams. If a perfect connoisseur can ascertain the merits and dimensions of a colossus, of which no part is extant but the great toe, Snip can do more—he can make you an impeccable pair of inexpressibles by simply taking the girth of your thumb. It would contribute marvellously, not only to the grace of our beaux, but to the health of our belles, if their advisers in affairs of dress had studied the antique, read Sir Joshua's Lectures and Hogarth's Analysis, and imbibed the principles of the Italian masters. So might they learn what to aim at—any fashionable assembly will show them what to shun.

As the colouring of a picture may be at once chaste and rich, so may a dress be splendid, and yet simple. Bad pictures are often both tawdry and dingy—so are ill-dressed people.

With regard to all drapery, whether stitched, painted, or carved, one rule is absolute—it should never challenge a separate attention, but seem a necessary congenital part of the person. Clothes, if we think of them on ourselves, must be uncomfortable—if in others, indecorous. The draperies of mere drapery-painters remind us of the silks and velvets displayed some years ago at Brandenburg-house, or a Sabbath-breaking Cockney in his Sunday toggery—or, to come nearer to the point, a lay figure in real clothes. Ill-fashioned garments have always more or less of this fault; you can neither wear them, nor see them worn, without thinking of them. But the best and most graceful offend on the same ground, if, however well-fashioned, they be very much out of the fashion, or anywise unsuitable to the age, rank, or character of the wearer. Sombre habits in a dashing woman of fashion have the effect of a disguise. It is possible to dress too plain for modesty.

Sir Joshua advises that drapery should be neither silk, satin, gros de Naples, velvet, plush, sarsenet, calico, cambric, paduasoy, corduroy, bombazine, huckaback, nor any other fabric or manufacture. It should be drapery, and nothing else—a wise precept, which the tailor cannot follow to the letter, but to the spirit whereof he will do well to attend. To prove that I am not singular in my views of this subject, it is only necessary to mention that certain ladies consulted Kent, the universal genius, painter, architect, and landscape-gardener, about their birth-day

suits; and the wicked wag arrayed one in a petticoat, decorated with columns of the five orders, and another in a bronze-coloured satin, with ornaments of gold.

In sober sadness, and conscious ignorance, I cannot conceive the mere colourist, or even the designer, who works for the eye alone,—whose designs contain neither poetry nor sense, and communicate neither knowledge nor power,—as anywise superior to a tailor. His craft may, or may not, be the more difficult of the two; but Snip's is undoubtedly the more useful. As for the sensual pleasure which colour is capable of affording, Titian himself was a fool to the waved and watered, glossy, light-catching, ever-varying hues of the silken bales, for which hungry Spitalfields too often receives the wages of starvation. Every vagrant Autolycus,—"each wandering merchant bent beneath his load," exposes to the covetous eyes of the village lass more gorgeous tints than ever lay on mortal *palette!*

To proceed. When the arts were reviving in Italy, England, occupied with foreign and domestic wars, oppressed in her trade, exhausted in her treasury, devoted to ruin, expense, and senseless ostentation, profited not by the example. Italy exported Bulls and Legates à Latere, but kept the painters at home; yet, in the age of Chaucer, a great artist would not have been neglected. The Third Edward was magnificent; his unfortunate grandson was profuse. John of Gaunt was the patron of Chaucer, but whether as poet or painter does not appear. Richard II. noticed

Gower.* What "art there was lack'd not encouragement." Painting partook of the warlike spirit of the time, and became martial, instead of religious. But a passion for gilded banners and surcoats of arms is not a taste for art. St. Edward is as good a subject as St. George; and the Wiverns of Heraldry are as

* In Thames, when it was flowing,
As I by boat came rowing;
So as Fortune her time set,
My liege lord perchance I met,
And so befell, as I came nigh,
Out of my boat, when he me *sigh*—*i.e.* saw,
He had me come into his barge;
But when I was with him at large,
Amongst other things he said,
He hath this charge upon me laid,
Some new thing I should book,
That he himself might on it look.
Confessio Amantis.

The earlier copies of this strange poem contain many flattering notices of Richard, which the old bard thought proper afterwards to expunge when that unhappy prince had lost the popularity to which he "enfeoffe himself," and for which he forfeited authority and respect.

Poets, vain men, in their mood,
Travel with the multitude.

Yet it was not much to Gower's credit, after receiving such condescension from his hapless sovereign, to hail the accession of the usurper Bolingbroke, in vile Leonine, or rather Asinine verses. The author who beshrives an established sovereign, has at least custom to plead for his folly; but he that hastens to salute the parhelion of revolution, runs the risk of being derided as a false prophet, and despised as a sycophant. Poets, it seems, could be as base in the fourteenth century as in the nineteenth. Nay, I will fearlessly aver, that the moral character of fine literature was never so high or so pure as at present.

Gower has of late found a sturdy patron in Sharon Turner, who seems inclined to set him on a level at least with Chaucer. Sharon is a sensible man, a patient investigator of the past. English history is much indebted to his labours; but he is not quite free from that amiable partiality which we all are apt to feel for what is peculiarly our own. Well did Elia observe, one cannot make a pet of a book that everybody reads. But a book that nobody has read but one's self, and perhaps half a dozen of one's particular friends, becomes part of one's personality—"bone of my bone." Sir William Jones equalled Ferdusi to Homer, and thought the Sacontala worthy of Euripides, Racine, or Shakspeare

far removed from *la belle Nature* as the Dragons of the Apocalypse. In fact, kings and princes cannot make artists; they can only employ and pay them; and mere pageantry is so far from art, that it hardly implies civilization. Well does Milton speak of "barbaric pearl and gold." The spirit of art is

Probably Dr. Bowring thinks the Russian anthology superior to the Greek.

According to "ancient Gower," love-making in his time must have been a very serious and erudite business; for his Confessio Amantis—a conversation between a young lover and the Priest of Venus—seems to be a metrical encyclopædia,—a brief, tedious abstract of the *omne scibile*,—a compendium of all the ologies then extant. Some of the love-tales, however, are related with much truth and simple pathos. Gower had certainly been in love himself; but whether he found alchemy and logic very serviceable in his courtship, is rather dubious. The leading idea of his Confessio is this—that the suitor, to be worthy of his mistress, should be furnished, not only with every moral and Christian virtue, but with all divine and human learning, with every feat of skill, and every device of wit. Mr. Turner has given copious extracts, which will probably satisfy the curious reader. He that wants more of the "moral Gower," will find the whole of his English works in the second volume of Chalmers's collection. His French verses, entitled "Potitio Orantis," and his Latin Rhyming Chronicle, have not, to my knowledge, been printed. The Vox Clamantis is a half historical half allegorical description of Wat Tyler's insurrection, and the disorders consequent thereon. It may contain some curious information, and should be carefully and learnedly edited at the public expense. Gower could not tell his tale of domestic troubles without converting it into a vision. This dozing somnambulistic fashion then in vogue has of late been revived by poets, who have gone to sleep to dream over what they had read in the *Times*, or the *Annual Register*,—to be informed, supernaturally, of the contents of the *London Gazette* extraordinary. It is remarkable, that almost all the allegorical compositions of the middle ages begin with a description of the weather, or the time of the year—a custom followed in the "Induction to the Mirror for Magistrates," and in the prologues to Gawain Douglass's Æneid. The Vox Clamantis accordingly begins with a florid delineation of summer, as Wat Tylor's rebellion broke out in June, 1381. The poet innocently gooth forth to pick flowers, falls asleep, and dreams that a huge multitude of non-monsters, in the shape of wolves, apes, swine, &c., advanced towards him—who for their leader chose a jay, called Wat—committed terrible havoc, and drove well-disposed persons —himself among the rest—to the woods and caves. His Wat, whom he sets forth as "Vox tetra, trux vultus, verissima mortis imago," bears small resemblance to the sighing sentimental Reformer, the Wat Tylor of surreptitious notoriety. The poem proceeds with a satirical description of the vices of the times—not exactly in the manner of the "Age,"

proud, and brooks not the condition of a pampered menial; hence, though it may spring, and grow, and flourish amid war and tumult, and even survive under a despotism—under a military aristocracy, it scarce can lift its head. It must be loved, honoured, esteemed, for its own sake—not fed, flattered, and despised. The knights and barons bold might be liberal, as the better kind of thieves generally are, to the minstrels who lauded their vices, and would have rewarded the limner who could emblazon images of blood or sensuality, as well as the *largitores rapinæ* commonly reward the instruments of their pleasures; but they cannot confer dignity. Those haughty lords might have sense enough to admire genius; but the pride of caste would never allow them to esteem it.

Vanity is a bad patron, and Superstition a much worse. It is a great mistake that Popery was the nurse of modern painting; the more rigid Romanists

a poem; or the "Age Reviewed," a satire; or even of the "Reigning Vice"—and concludes with earnestly exhorting Richard to a radical reform of himself. As a specimen of Gower's Latin versification:—

> "Sylva vetus densa, nulla violata securi,
> Absque supercilio, mihi nubis sub tegumento;
> Nulla superficies tunc, quia trita fuit,
> Perque dies aliquot latitens omnemque tremiscens
> Ad strepitum fagi, visa pericla cavens."

These verses would hardly escape flogging at Eton.

Gower seems to have been a man of considerable wealth, which he devoted and bequeathed to pious purposes. Like most of our early writers, characterised at least as much by the garrulity of age as the simplicity of childhood, "full of wise saws and modern instances," an endless story-teller, who could conjure a Christian meaning into a heathen fable, and evoke a heavy moral from a light love-tale; a very honest man—politics excepted—with a fair allowance of honest self-importance; a severe censor of his age, which was indeed a bad one; and a bold monitor of his king, when that king was too feeble to resent the indignity.

are, and always were, as averse to real art as the Puritans themselves. Individual Popes, and wealthy orders, doubtless, encouraged painting; but this supposed misappropriation of church-treasures did not escape censure. Superstition is the child of Fear—the basest, cruellest, blindest, stupidest passion in human nature. It represents the Deity as an ugly and malignant Demon: sees nothing but evil and deformity in the works of God. How, then, should it imprint beauty on the works of man? Idolatry, and her elder sister Allegory, have spawned more monsters than ever sprung from Medusa's Gorgon blood. Nothing can be meaner or more hideous than the daubs and dolls to which the Papists fall down. Raphael's Madonnas work no miracles. In truth, the church of Rome has been as much divided against itself, as ever the Protestant Miscellany. There are High-Church Catholics, and Low-Church Catholics, bigots, and liberals, poetical enthusiasts, vulgar fanatics, and Utilitarian prosemen, united, it may be, by a nominal adherence, to Lord Peter, but far enough from being of one mind, either about religious painting or anything else.

After all, the most interesting artists of the Middle Ages were not the professors, with their omnigenous qualifications, but the monks and the ladies. The illuminated missals, and other manuscripts—as finely pencilled as time and patience could make them—as gay as gilt and glowing colours must be—not always so decorous as work of holy hand should be—have a value, which does not invariably pertain to the *chefs-*

d'œuvre of the classic schools—one may learn a great deal from them. From these, and the unceasing fulminations of the pulpit against excess of apparel, together with the yet more inefficient sumptuary laws, we find that our wise ancestors were even more expensive, and far more absurd and indecent, in arraying their persons, than the most degenerate of their descendants. We discover something of their way of living, which was far more genial and comfortable than we are apt to suppose. We may form some notion of their prevailing cast of features. Above all, the existence of such laborious luxuries of the eye, is a consoling fact. To read the books called Histories, we might imagine that murder and arson, tyranny and fraud, usurpation and persecution, were the sole employments of mankind—that the great were all wicked, and the poor all miserable. It is pleasant, therefore, to find that men have always had some leisure—that a few have ever been able to look out of their windows with calm, observant eyes—and that many can be amused with trifles in the worst of times—that is, at all times—which, thank God, are not half so bad as some malcontents would persuade us. Many of these curiosities were destroyed at the Reformation, which, like all great changes, was brought about by the combined agency of the best spirits and the worst. Whether the havoc of that era proceeded from misguided zeal, and indiscreet imitation of the Israelites, or from the mobbish love of destruction, incited, as usual, by cold-blooded speculators in plunder, for us it is most wise to

consider it as the price of a benefit, which could not be purchased too dear. It is some consolation, too, that we had no works of art worth regretting. We have cathedrals still in beauty and perfection; and though some are in ruins, they are not less honourable—perhaps more honoured, and certainly more poetical and picturesque. But the tapestry and embroidery, the curious needlework, the labours of the graphic loom, which employed the well-pricked fingers of the dames of old, could excite no religious animosity; but worms, and damps, and fire, and change of fashions, and, perhaps more than all, the gold and silver thread which they contained, have mingled most of these products of domestic industry with the mass of things that were. But it is by no means true, as Mr. Cunningham asserts, that this branch of art is entirely neglected at present. The ladies do not, indeed, work battle-pieces, or Scripture-pieces, or naked gods, in worsted, mohair, or silk; but flowers, fruit, and birds of gorgeous plumage, lions, tigers, and giraffes, grow daily beneath their hands; and very pretty they are. We have watched their progress many a time. We can remember, too, when the cozy parlour of a country inn, or the triangular sanctum of a respectable shopkeeper, was never without some garniture of this kind, with the fair artist's name (generally a pretty name) ingeniously interwoven. We think, by the way, that Delia, and Daphne, and Strephon, with all the paraphernalia of Cupids, arrows, crooks, and sheep, never look so natural as when stitched in worsted. Needlework is

the pastoral poetry of design. A snug room hung round with tapestry is the truest Arcadia.

But we loiter in these bye-paths and flowery lanes —*fugit irreparabile tempus*—it is past twelve, and we are still in the fourteenth century. If you please, we will pass on to the year 1526, when Holbein arrived in England; and for the first time our dear little isle entertained a great painter. He was a native of Basle; but finding the salubrious influences of native air counteracted by an over-rating wife and an under-rating public, he came to the court of bluff King Harry. His first English patron was the Earl of Arundel—a title to which art owes something, and chronology more.

Hans is commonly regarded as a literal prosaic portrait-painter, who drew correctly what he saw, but saw only with every-day eyes, and made a dead map of the human countenance,—devoid of all that makes beauty charming, or irregularity characteristic. Those who have seen his "Dance of Death," will not readily believe that he wanted invention. He who could impart expression to a skull, and intellectual interest to all varieties of corruption, could scarce be a mechanical matter-of-fact person. Neither is it true that his portraits are without meaning, though they may not be distinguished for grace. They are like what his sitters for the most part were, and were content to be represented—kings, queens, lords, and ladies, not divinities, nor very amiable men and women. But when he had a worthy subject, he could do ample justice—witness his Sir Thomas More, in

whom he has combined, what seldom meet, regular beauty, with the cast of thought,—dignity with benevolence,—the air of rank with the stamp of individuality. It is beautifully engraved in Southey's Colloquies, and is very like the apparition. Hans did not flatter Henry, whom he has made as fat, sensual, cruel, and clever, as the life itself; he could flatter, however, as King Harry found in the case of Anne of Cleves, whose Teutonic bulk drew forth that well-known exclamation of the Defender of the Faith, which proves that kings were less courteous in days of yore than at present; a Flanders mare had been too good a wife for him. He had good brains, however, and knew something of value, if the following anecdote be true: "One day, while the artist was painting in private the portrait of a favourite lady for the king, a great lord unexpectedly found his way into the chamber. The painter, a brawny, powerful man, and somewhat touchy of temper, threw the intruder down stairs, bolted the door, ran to the king by a private passage, fell on his knees, asked for pardon, and obtained it. In came the courtier, and made his complaint. 'By God's splendour,' exclaimed the king, 'you have not to do with Hans, but with me. Of seven peasants I can make seven lords, but I cannot make one Hans Holbein.'" It is traditionally asserted that Henry employed Holbein to paint the portraits of the fairest young ladies in his kingdom, that in case of the queen patient playing the provoked wife, he might go and choose from his gallery. There is no knowing what such a king

might do,—but what need of portraits, when he could command the originals?

The love of title and precedence is the besetting sin of womanhood, but surely no good woman would willingly have been Henry's wife—even to be England's queen? Bluebeard, or the Sultan Schahriar, or the Prince of Camboy, "who nightly stinks a queen to death," would have been a preferable spouse.

Holbein died of the plague in 1554. Allan has thought it worth while to tell us, that he wrought with the left hand. He is perfectly right,—let the left hand not lose the credit of so much excellence.

"He had a strong frame, a swarthy sensual face, and a neck like a bull." His works were once more numerous in England than at present; some were destroyed during the civil wars, some sold abroad by the Puritan Parliament, and many perished when Whitehall was burned. That his portraits are stiff, is historically a merit—they represent folks that had nothing easy about them. With such costumes, such morals, such politics, and such religion, what could people be but stiff? The gradual influence of truth, liberty, and Christian charity, were needed to give elasticity to the limbs, and play to the features.

It is no trivial circumstance in the history of art to record how artists were paid. Allan, we think, is wrong in supposing that the arts were necessarily in a low condition, when some artists were paid by the square foot. Duodecimals are not more arbitrary than popular taste. Many have been the painters

who would have rejoiced to be remunerated by so equitable a standard. Besides, the instances he produces refer chiefly to the ornamenting of public buildings, painted windows, &c., which have ever been consigned to the trading branch of the profession. Painters are, and always were, better paid than poets. Trading painters and trading authors can only expect to receive value for quantity. Literature is not universally degraded because certain penmen are recompensed at the rate of a penny a-line; and are not splendid articles written monthly for ten and even five guineas per sheet?

Of King Henry's personal taste, we have a fair sample in the written instructions which he left for his own monument. "The King shall appear on horseback, of the stature of a goodly man, while over him shall appear the image of God the Father holding the King's soul in his left hand, and his right hand extended in the act of benediction." The whole was to be of brouze, and the blasphemous absurdity was actually commenced. It is hardly candid to attribute to the parsimony of Elizabeth, the non-completion of such an insult to piety and common sense.

"Painting maintained its place in popular estimation during the brief and guilty reign of Mary" Its place in popular estimation was probably low enough—the Romanist thought it mechanical, and the Protestant damnable. "Sir Antonio More received from Philip for his portrait of the Queen a chain of gold, with the more substantial addition of

400*l.* a-year as painter to the King." If Sir Antonio painted the traditional likeness of bloody Mary, he was no flatterer. She is old and ugly enough for a frontispiece to the Book of Martyrs. Mr. Cunningham has doubtless sufficient vouchers for his facts; but one would scarce have suspected Philip of loving his wife well enough to give away chains for her vinegar features; and if Sir Antonio received 400*l.*, he was better paid than he could possibly deserve. Holbein's pension was only two hundred florins.

How happy had it been for Mary had she died a nun, or sunk uncrowned beneath the weight of royal sorrow! The comfort of a worse than widowed mother—the duteous daughter of a father who disowned and bastardized her, the devoted confessor of an oppressed and plundered church, she had been a saint to the generous Protestant no less than to the sympathising Catholic, had her rival's success consigned her to the cloister, or the overthrow of her religion to a grave. The Princess Mary had been consecrated to memory had the Queen Mary never reigned. Sir Antonio seems to have loved the savour of human sacrifice, for he accompanied Philip to Spain, and subsequently held an office under the Duke of Alva, whose favour he conciliated by portraits of favourite ladies—no solitary instance of the Miltonic juxtaposition of "lust and hate." At length he betook himself to the receipt of custom in West Flanders, and forsook an art to which he was probably no ornament.

Advancing to the golden days of good Queen Bess, we feel as one that, after long wandering in the uncertain twilight of a subterraneous ruin, and guessing at the mutilated images and outworn inscriptions, steps at once into cheerful day, and hails familiar forms of living beauty. We hear our own language—we find ourselves among men of like passions as ourselves. The age of Cressy and Poitiers, of Langland, Gower, and Chaucer, was the Soobhi Kazim of England, that premature and short-lived dawn which the fanciful Persian ascribes to the sun's peeping through a hole in Mount Caucasus—which but forebodes and typifies the real daybreak. An interim of deep and perilous darkness ensued—the unseen righteousness of heaven made human wickedness perform the needful work which good men cannot do. The strongholds of iniquity were shaken by the gloomy earthquake; and then, the pure light that sets not till even—that shall not set till angels sing the vespers of this earth—came forth in power and glory. Happier days have been before and since, than the days of Elizabeth. Much as we owe to the men of her time, it was no time to make us murmur at that irrevocable decree beyond the power of Jove to alter, which forbids the past to return. It was a time to think, to dream, to read of—not to live in. But it is doubtful whether any period since the flood has been so favourable to the development of the poetic imagination. It was the true age of chivalry. Chivalry never existed but in the imaginations of poets, and in the noble desires of men who

aspired to realise the inventions of the poets. The Chevalier Bayard and Sir Philip Sidney were only a more rational kind of Quixotes—men brave by nature, actuated by impulses unconsciously imbibed from romantic fiction, who had conceived an idea, and died in the attempt to make it an historic fact. But chivalry was only one element in the orb of poetry. Religion had made every man think of himself—of himself not only as a living, but as an immortal being. It had given an import to every motion, every throb of the individual heart. Character, which among the ancients was ever deemed a defect, a falling away from the standard of abstract humanity, a theme of ridicule, the proper staff of satire and comedy, assumed a tragic dignity; it was seen that each man involves in his own peculiar nature a distinct ideal—and that the perfection of one is no more the perfection of another, than the beauty of the lily is the beauty of the cedar. Yet, amid all this diversity of ministrations, this endless variety of hue and lineament, religion taught, confirmed, and consecrated the mighty truth, that "one touch of Nature makes the whole world kin." The daily goings-on of our business and bosoms began to partake of that interest which of old pertained only to those massy operations, in which the bulk of mankind are and can be no more than blind agents or passive sufferers. The kindly affections which, according to the Houyhnm philosophy of the heathens, and the Manichean dogmas of the monks, were at best but tolerated weaknesses or venial sins, were

sublimed to holy duties; and human creatures, heretofore considered but as the perishing moments composing the permanent being of a commonwealth, discovered in themselves a principle of duration, compared to which the boasted solidity of states and institutions was a vain and a fleeting thing. The controversies of the time, however profitless in themselves, gave a strength, an agility, a subtle and penetrative quality to thought, which—now no longer hermetically sealed up in axioms, definitions, and formal aphorisms—resumed its natural intercourse with the visible and the sentient. The reciprocal influences of intellect and feeling displayed themselves in act and in speech—in prose and in poetry. Nor was this era less opulent in the *matériel* of imagination, than potent in the *morale*. The imposing ceremonial of the Romish church, though banished and forbidden, yet lingered in the regret of many, and in the memory of all. The mask and antique pageantry, the allegorical and symbolical spirit of the middle age, still remained to be immortalised by Spenser. The classes, degrees, and vocations of society were still marked by the picturesque and dramatic distinctions of dress and manner, while the ambitious affectation and ungainly mimicry of the mounting commonalty were endless topics of humour and ridicule.

The splendid apparel, the metaphoric euphuism, the new-fangled oaths, and elaborate gallantry of the young courtiers, who bore their manors on their back, and wasted their sleepless wits to coin new compli-

ments; the grave splendour, the crafty wisdom, the sententious speech, and politic piety of the sage statesman; the precise, square-cut, taciturn regularity of the smooth-pated, velvet-capped citizen; the nicked-bearded, huffing, hectoring, basket-hilted adventurer; the traveller with his foreign phantasies, and unheard-of wonders, best believed when he 'was lying, and often discredited when he told the truth; the country gentleman who had newly stepped into the place of a thinned and impoverished baronage; the idolized, but not yet enfranchised females, in whose wardrobe was no middle state between velvet and homespun woollen, in whose education no mean betwixt the erudition of a divine and the ignorance of a household drudger, either calculated to govern a kingdom, or simply fit "to suckle fools and chronicle small beer:"—these, and a hundred antics beside, not forgetting the all-licensed fool, that excellent substitute for a free press, made the world a mask of all professions—a gay and gorgeous procession of fancy costume. Add to this, that two-thirds of the planet, with numberless varieties of men, and much that was vast, magnificent, beautiful, rich, and strange by land or sea, were but just disclosed to Europe by voyagers and pilgrims, whose personal deeds and sufferings outdid romance, and made impossibility seem light work. Natural philosophy, too, had much of the sentimental and mysterious character which accords with poetry. Enough of real science mingled with it to draw respect to the superstitious alloy, which wrought on the hopes and fears

of the many. Astrology walked hand in hand with astronomy;—and the chemists besought the spirits of the elements to impart to their occult and suspected enquiries, the elixir of life, and the transmuting stone. At once dupes and deceivers, they pretended to secrets which they knew that they did not possess, and contrived to extract from less learned fools the means of performing their costly and endless researches, ever fancying that the present experiment would make them masters of the earth. How large a field of allusion was supplied by the mystic properties, signatures, antipathies and sympathies of stones and plants, by planetary hours, and stellar configurations! The heart and passions of men entered into every pursuit; even the barren, unfeeling lines of the mathematician were interested with human fate, and abstract numbers were powerful over happiness and misery. It is needless to remark how much true science is indebted to these fancies. We speak of their value to the imagination, for which the poet Dee was a better star-gazer than Herschel, and Paracelsus a far greater chemist than Sir Humphry Davy. The quacks of that day spiritualised everything. Those of our times are the earthiest of all materialists.

The lore of Greece and Rome, the beautiful shapes of the old mythology, which have lately been readmitted to verse, contributed not a little to the rich fancies of our earlier bards. They were not, then, polluted by Cockneyism, or worn out by school versifiers, nor staled by loveless love-ditties, and laureate raptures uninspired by loyalty—they had all

the freshness of novelty, and the weighty reverence of age and association.

The more recent literature of Spain, Italy, and France, was also rife in England. Our poets borrowed much. What they deemed excellent they made their own with Roman boldness. What was good was not spoiled to make it original; for there were no reviewers in those days,—none of those indefatigable bookworms, who would wade through the dullest folio in search of stolen goods; and, to convict a contemporary of plagiarism, would even read their Bible.

The sex and character of Elizabeth herself was no weak ingredient in the poetic spirit of the time. Loyalty and gallantry blended in the adoration paid her; and the supremacy which she claimed and exercised over the church, invested her regality with a sacred unction that pertained not to feudal sovereigns. It is scarce too much to say, that the Virgin-queen appropriated the Catholic honours of the Virgin Mary. She was as great as Diana of the Ephesians. The moon shone but to furnish a type of her bright and stainless maidenhood. To magnify her greatness, the humility of courtly adulation merged in the ecstasies of Platonic love. She was charming by indefeasible right;—a *jure divino* beauty. Her fascinations multiplied with her wrinkles, and her admirers might have anticipated the conceit of Cowley—

> "The antiperistasis of age
> More inflamed their amorous rage."

It is easy for a Whig, or a Puritan, or any other unimaginative blockhead, to cry out against all this, as nauseous flattery, and assert that after all she was rather an unpoetical personage than otherwise—a coarse-minded old maid, half prude, half coquette, whose better part was mannish, and all that belonged to her sex a ludicrous exaggeration of its weaknesses. But meanwhile, they overlook the fact, that not the woman Elizabeth, but the Virgin-queen, the royal heroine, is the theme of admiration. Not the petty virtues, the pretty sensibilities, the cheap charity, the prim decorum, which modern flatterers dwell upon, degrading royalty, while they palaver its possessor, but Britannia's sacred majesty, enshrined in chaste and lofty womanhood. Our ancestors paid their compliments to sex or rank—ours are addressed to the person. There is no flattery where there is no falsehood—no falsehood where there is no deception. Loyalty of old was a passion, and passion has a truth of its own—and as language does not always furnish expressions exactly adapted, or native to the feeling, what can the loyal poet do, but take the most precious portion of the currency, and impress it with the mint-mark of his own devoted fancy? Perhaps there never was a more panegyrical rhymer than Spenser, and yet, so fine and ethereal is his incense, that the breath of morning is not more cool and salutary.

"It falls me here to write of Chastity,
That fayrest virtue, far above the rest:
For which what needs me fetch from Faëry
Forreine ensamples it to have exprest?

Sith it is shrined in my soveraine's brest,
And form'd so lively in each *perfect part*,
That to all ladies, which have it *profest*,
Need but behold the *portraict of her hart*,
If pourtray'd it might be by any *living art*:
But living art may not least part expresse,
Nor life-resembling pencil it can paint,
All were it Zeuxis or Praxiteles,
His dædale hand would faile and greatly faynt,
And her perfections with his error taynt;
Ne poet's wit, that passeth painter farre
In picturing the parts of beauty daynt," &c.

But neither Zeuxis nor Praxiteles were called from the dead to mar her perfections, or record her negative charms. Poetry was the only art that flourished in the Virgin reign. The pure Gothic, after attaining its full efflorescence under Henry VII., departed, never to return. The Grecian orders were not only absurdly jumbled together, but yet more outrageously conglomerated with the Gothic and Arabesque. "To gild refined gold—to paint the lily," was all the humour of it. A similar inconsistency infected literature. The classic and the romantic (to use those terms, which, though popular, are not logically exact) were interwoven. The Arcadia and the Fairy Queen are glorious offences, which "make defect perfection." Perhaps Shakspeare's "small Latin, and less Greek," preserved him from worse anachronisms than any that he has committed. Queen Bess's patronage was of the national breed: she loved no pictures so well as portraits of herself. As, however, her painters have not flattered her, it may not uncharitably be concluded that they were no great

deacons in their craft. It is a much easier thing to assure a homely female, in prose or rhyme, that she is beautiful, than to represent her so upon canvas. Her effigies are, I believe, pretty numerous, varying in ugliness, but none that I have seen even handsome—prettiness, of course, is out of the question. She was fond of finery, but had no taste in dress. Her ruff is downright odious; and the liberal exposure of her neck and bosom anything but alluring. With all her pearls about her, she looks like a pawnbroker's lady bedizened for an Easter ball, with all the unredeemed pledges from her husband's shop. She seems to have patronised that chimera in the ideal or allegorical portrait, at which Rubens and Sir Joshua were so often doomed to toil. She would not allow a shadow in her picture, arguing, like a Chinese or a chop-logic, that shade is only an accident, and no true property of body. Like Alexander, who forbade all sculptors but Lysippus to carve his image, she prohibited all but special cunning limners from drawing her effigy. This was in 1653, anno regni 5, while, though no chicken, she still was not clean past her youth. This order was probably intended to prevent caricatures. At last, she quarrelled with her looking-glass, as well as her painters, and her maids of honour removed all mirrors from her apartments, as carefully as Ministers exclude opposition papers (we hope not Maga) from the presence of our most gracious Sovereign. It is even said that those fair nettles of India took advantage of her weakness, to dress her head awry, and to apply the rouge to

her nose instead of her cheeks. So may the superannuated eagle be pecked at by daws. But the tale is not probable. After all, it is but the captious inference of witlings and scoffers, that attributes to mere sexual vanity that superstitious horror of encroaching age, from which the wisest are not always free. It may be that they shrink from the reflection of their wrinkles, not as from the despoilers of beauty, but as from the vaunt-couriers of dissolution. In rosy youth, while yet the brow is alabaster-veined with Heaven's own tint, and the dark tresses turn golden in the sun, the lapse of time is imperceptible as the throbbing of a heart at ease. "So like, so very like, is day to day," one primrose scarce more like another. Who ever saw their first grey hairs, or marked the crow-feet at the angle of their eyes, without a sigh or a tear, a momentaneous self-abasement, a sudden sinking of the soul, a thought that youth is flown for ever? None but the blessed few that, having dedicated their spring of life to Heaven, behold in the shedding of their vernal blossoms, a promise that the season of immortal fruit is near. It is a frailty, almost an instance of humanity, to aim at concealing that from others, of which ourselves are painfully conscious. The herculean Johnson keenly resented the least allusion to the shortness of his sight. So entirely is man a social animal, so dependent are all his feelings for their very existence upon communication and sympathy, that the "fee-griefs," which none but ourselves are privy to, are forgotten as soon as they are

removed from the senses. The artifices to which so many have recourse to conceal their declining years, are often intended more to soothe themselves, than to impose on others. This aversion to growing old is specially natural and excusable in the celibate and the childless. The borrowed curls, the pencilled eyebrows,

> "The steely-prison'd shape,
> So oft made taper by constraint of tape,"

the various cosmetic secrets, well-known to the middle ages, not only of the softer sex, are not unseemly in a spinster, so long as they succeed in making her look young. They are intolerable in a mother of any age. But we, my dear Christopher, resigned and benevolent old bachelors as we are, can well appreciate the vanity of the aged heart, that sees not its youth renewed in any growing dearer self. Nothing denotes the advances of life, at once so surely and so pleasantly, as children springing up around a good man's table. Perhaps our famous Queen, in her latter days, though full of honours as of years, would gladly have changed places with the wife of any yeoman that had a child to receive her last blessing, —whose few acres were not to pass away to the hungry expecting son of a hated rival. Her virginity was not like that of Jephthah's daughter, a free-will offering to the Lord. Pride, and policy, and disappointment, and, it may be, hopeless, self-condemned affection, conspired to perpetuate it. Probably it was well for England that no offspring of hers inherited her throne. By some strange ordinance of nature,

it generally happens that these wonderful, clever women produce idiots or madmen. Witness Semiramis, Agrippina, Catherine de Medicis, Mary de Medicis, Catherine of Russia, and Lady Wortley Montague. One miniature of Elizabeth I have seen, which, though not beautiful, is profoundly interesting; it presents her as she was in the days of her danger and captivity, when the same wily policy, keeping its path, even while it seemed to swerve, was needful to preserve her life, that afterwards kept her firm on a throne. Who was the artist that produced it? I know not: but it bears the strongest marks of authenticity, if to be exactly what a learned spirit would fancy Elizabeth—young, a prisoner, and in peril—be evidence of true portraiture. There is pride,—not aping humility, but wearing it as a well-beseeming habit; there is passion, strongly controlled by the will, but not extinct,—neither dead nor sleeping, but watchful and silent; brows sternly sustaining a weight of care, after which a crown could be but light; a manly intellect, allied with female craft;—but, nonsense! it will be said; no colours whatever could represent all this, and that, too, in little, for the picture was among Bone's enamels. Well, then, it suggested it all. Perhaps the finest Madonna ever painted, would be no more than a meek, pious, pretty woman, and an innocent child, if we knew not whom it was meant for.

Little as genuine art was cultivated or encouraged under Elizabeth, portrait, which, in strict speech, is historical, contra-distinguished from poetical, painting

was not neglected. The features of most of her worthies, warriors, statesmen, poets, and divines, have been recorded with fidelity, or at least with much verisimilitude. There is a decided cast of countenance, a family likeness, in all the subjects of Elizabeth and James, which can no more be mistaken than described. It is not that sameness which an unimaginative dauber cannot help impressing on a generation of sitters—it is not the "foolish face" transmitted through a whole pedigree of country gentlemen—it is not the generic likeness of a breed—the gentilitious contour of a nation. Every face has its own character, and the degrees of beauty and ugliness are abundantly varied. Shakspeare is as unlike Darnley as Darnley is unlike Cecil, or Queen Elizabeth is unlike the Scottish Mary. But so is the style of Shakspeare's dramas utterly different from Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity, or Burleigh's State Papers; yet it is manifestly the style of the same period. The analogy holds good with regard to the style of features and expression. If any one, having the opportunity, which, alas! I have not, will examine Lodge, Vertue, or any well-engraved series of portraits, or a decent gallery of family pictures, he will verify an observation, which words can but ill convey, and argument cannot prove. The Elizabethan physiognomy prevailed, with slight variation in the generic character, through the reign of her successor, and in the court of Charles the First, though the superior genius of Vandyke superadded to that character a grace, a life, power, action, thought, fire, and generosity, that was

his own. The Cavaliers, however, with few exceptions, were men of more honour than principle—more passionate than meditative—more elegant than profound. We may vainly regret that Spenser, Sidney, Shakspeare, Raleigh, Bacon, had not a Vandyke to draw them. Of the Puritans, such as were gentlemen preserved, beneath the cropped heads and high-crowned hats, the ancient English contour, though the free play and transparency of looks are gone. Heaven help the Puritans had the Long Parliament, and the Assembly of Divines, been permitted to realise their ideal in church and state! Ere one generation had passed away, not a pretty woman would have existed between John-o'Groat's house and Lizard Point. To see the havoc which Puritanism makes in the loveliest faces, even after they are fully formed, what would be its effect on plastic infancy—how would it intensify itself by traduction!

Another race of visages came in with the Restoration, and yet another with the House of Hanover. We are ourselves a fourth; but this is anticipation. Who were the artists who pourtrayed the luminaries of the Maiden reign, is not exactly recorded. As economy was the order of the day, few foreigners seem to have been tempted across the Channel. We read, however, of one Lucas de Heere, a native of Ghent, a poet, a painter, and wit, who visited England, and executed several portraits. He was employed to paint the gallery of the Earl of Lincoln, in which, among other allegorical emblems of nations, as the representative and express image of Anglicism,

he drew a naked man, with a pair of shears, and various coloured cloths! His witticism, which is manifestly descended from the ass and trusses of hay, was borrowed from Andrew Borde's Induction to Knowledge, prefixed to which is the figure of an English Adamite, with these lines:—

> "I am an Englishman, and naked I stand here,
> Musing in mind what garment I shall wear."

Andrew Borde, a doctor of physic, and a man of much learning, is said to have been the original Merry-Andrew. Times are altered. There is now no such character as the erudite Buffoon, the Mountebank of Genius, the Vagabond Philosopher,—no Tom Brown, no Beronicius, no Paracelsus. The men of highest endowments, and greatest acquirements, are distinguished by domestic virtues, and regularity of life.—So much the better for themselves and their families, but all the worse for their biographers.

Hiliard, Oliver, and Cooper, are the first native names that occur in the list of British artists. They were all miniature painters; and may have preserved the lineaments of men whose deeds are recorded in history, or their minds impressed upon works of their own. Miniature occupies about the same station in art that sonnet obtains in poetry—exquisite finish, softness, and brilliance, are essential to both, and perhaps portability is the best property of either. A lady may wear a miniature about her neck, or on the blue veins of her polished wrist, or next her heart, if it be her father's or husband's—so may she carry a

sonnet in her album, bound in wavy satin, with golden clasps over, or in her reticule—not ridicule—at least if it be mine, or in her memory, if it adheres spontaneously, as honey dew to rose leaves, for I deprecate the practice of getting by heart, *malice prepense*. By my humanity, I would not publish a poem, if I thought one single poor child would be tasked to learn it by heart, not for a penny a line!

The accession of the House of Stuart naturally leads us to inquire to whom we owe the effigy of Mary, whose beauty continues to influence imagination, after her very bones are turned to dust. Her portraits are various; the most lovely I ever saw is in the Bodleian at Oxford. It is the most powerful vindicator her memory has obtained—and yet there is that in her look which a fond husband might suspect, and a fool like Darnley tremble at. She could not forgive the murder of Rizzio. She has the glance that maddened poor Chatelar: well might Elizabeth fear her—

> "The mermaid,
> Uttering such dulcet and harmonious breath,
> That the rude sea grew civil at her song,
> And certain stars shot madly from their spheres,
> To hear the sea-maid's music."

The Stuarts, an ingenious but unhappy race, were cultivators and encouragers of the arts of intellect. Even the unfortunate favourites of James III., though described by historians as low artizans, were probably liberal artists. Cochrane, who is called a stone-mason, might be an architect. Rogers was a skilful musician, and doubtless a poet, like his namesake.

The very name 's a poet. Leonard was a smith; but so was Benvenuto Cellini. He was no maker of hobnails, but a deviser of curious articles in metal—and perhaps, had he lived, and Homer been translated, would have copied the shield of Achilles. Hommil, the tailor, was a sculptor and painter, who exercised his taste and ingenuity in contriving costumes. But Archibald Bell-the-Cat cared for none of these things; and thus it is men are classed, not according to the high function of their minds, but the humble means whereby they sustain their bodies. Had James patronised Burns, he would have been reproached with the familiarity of a gauger. Waller called Milton the old blind schoolmaster, and there are who have spoken of Wordsworth as the stampmaster.

Passing over the reign of the learned and pacific author of the "Counterblast to Tobacco," we find a truly loyal patron of art in his unfortunate successor. Whether Charles could have made England a country of painters, may be doubted; for to create genius is a higher prerogative than he ever assumed; but he certainly did his best to make his court a domicile of artists, and his palace a conservatory of pictures. Considering how, even in his peaceful days, he was straitened for money, it is wonderful how much he did,—and while his political friendship was worth purchasing, foreign states assiduously paid homage to his taste, and instead of ivory puzzles and diamond snuff-boxes, the usual free-will offerings of diplomacy, presented him with Tintorets and Titians. But Catholic artists were slow in accepting his invitations;

nor is it surprising that they shunned a country where the multitude were taught to consider their genius a crime, and where their religion was a statutable offence. Yet Rubens, protected by the sacro-sanctity of an Ambassador, partook awhile of his hospitality, and adorned Whitehall with the apotheosis of James the First. Rubens was the Claudian of painters, the pictorial laureate; the splendour of his colouring, and the vigour of his design, disguise the nothingness of his subject. His pictures put you in mind of a vast parterre of thick-set carnations and anemonies,—a glowing *brochure* of double-daisies. Everything is rich and voluptuous, but all seems over-fed, and forced. Men, women, beasts, virtues, and deities, are fattened like prize oxen for a show. Rubens is Titian Dutchified. I should like to know whether he ever drank canary with Ben Jonson; they would have agreed admirably, unless, indeed, they were too blunt for one another. By far the most interesting of Rubens's pictures are his portraits of himself and his wives;—he was worth a score of French dukes and cardinals; and to have been the spouse of such a man was better than being the unloved consort and early widow of the over-lauded apostate hero of the Henriade. But Rubens is not to be ranked among English painters. There is a luxurious negation of common sense in his court allegories, that does not amalgamate with our national character. The genius of England is essentially dramatic. No people are so intensely individualised as the English. Every Englishman is a definite self, and sympathises with his fellow-creatures, not as

portions of a constituted whole, but as organised microcosms. The self-love of an Englishman is not selfishness,—it is the light which instructs how to love his neighbour. He, not alone, but perhaps more than other men, knows and feels that the very meanest child of Adam—a labourer bowed to earth with daily toil—an infant at the breast—a little lassie singing as she carries her eggs to market—is a more express image of the great Creator than all the innumerable orbs of lifeless matter that throng infinity; that all the abstract perfection which philosophers have dreamed is not half so good as the every-day goodness which human life is always needing. He that talks of "stooping to truth," either talks nonsense, or tries to puzzle his hearers with irreverent irony, and at all events does not speak good English.

This spirit of individuality has had a strong and shaping power over our literature. Perhaps the most striking instances of it are to be found in works where it would be least expected. We do not wonder that Chaucer and Shakspeare should have individualised their characters,—it was their business, their poetic duty, so to do. But that Spenser and Bunyan (start not, good reader, they are well worthy to be mentioned together) should have made mere abstractions as substantially familiar to the imagination as if they were living members of our domestic circles,—that they should have turned personifications into *bonâ fide* persons—and clothed the dry bones of allegory with vital flesh—and shown Fairy Land—and the Valley of the Shadow of Death—and the Delectable Mountains,

—that figure the calm of a Christian death-bed, the counterpart of blessed immortality, as vividly, yea palpably, as our own birth-place appears in our happiest dreams, bespeaks a might of love that never was bestowed by mortal passion, which dimly shadows the creative orgasm of the Eternal. I know not whether that partiality for portrait, of which historical painters are given to complain, is not a necessary result of the peculiar constitution of British society; but certainly we are more interested in our own and our neighbour's faces than in the finest combinations of line and colour. Hence Vandyke, Lely, and Kneller, though foreigners by birth, may justly be recorded among English artists, for they are the illustrators of our history. To the taste of King Charles, and the successful mediation of Sir Kenelm Digby, inventor of

> " —— the famed Hermetic powder,
> Which wounds five miles point-blank would solder,"

we are indebted for our Vandykes. Happy was the painter who was summoned, not to take an inventory of blue eyes, arched eyebrows, Grecian noses, rosy-mouthed and dimpled chins, insipid prettiness, and ugly no-meaning,—not to register charms uninteresting to all but lovers, or set nature's faults in a note-book,—not to cheat oblivion of her due, and tell the world that folly and vanity wrote as legible a hand two centuries back as at the present day,—but to realise the narration of Clarendon,—to justify the panegyrics of Waller,—to show how they looked upon earth, whose spirits speak to us from the grave

But most happy are we, who with hearts as tranquil as the mute image of departed sorrow, can look on the likenesses of the illustrious dead, and read their sad but ever glorious story, and, wondering, ask ourselves if such things really were.

Of Vandyke's merits as a painter, I profess not to discourse. Mr. Cunningham has, doubtless, done him justice. He calls him the Delineator of Intellect; and says that his men are superior to his women—"who have not the fresh innocent loveliness of nature." But art has its limits. I do not think the fresh innocent loveliness of nature can be painted. The innocence of life looks silly in a picture,—a painted smile is at best an immovable simper, and laughter stares out of the canvas like idiot drunkenness. You might as well attempt to sketch the corporeal dimensions of a sound, to tell the colour of a thought, or represent a forgotten dream in perspective, as to depict those charms that would not charm were they not for ever on the wing. The beauty of painters is of a grave, steadfast character; they can give the permanent expression of conscious thought, and trace the lines of habitual feeling, but when they try to perpetuate the transiency of emotions that are coeval with the moment, they vie in absurdity with the virtuoso who took out a patent for crystallising moonshine.

Moreover, it is to be recollected that Vandyke was the recorder of an ominous season. The shadow of the time was cast on every countenance. I can scarce think the babies smiled as now they smile. The face of Charles himself is a prophecy of his

doom; and his fair Queen has eyes that seem made for tears,—a bosom swelling with anticipated woe.

Vandyke died just before the storm broke out. As a portrait-painter, he was probably less obnoxious to the ruling party than some of his brethren in art would have been; yet he would not long have escaped the calumny which all and everything noble and elegant partook with the royal patron. The love of art was ranked among Charles's heaviest crimes; and sad it is to think that many who loved art themselves prompted or echoed the malignant outcry, which the vulgar got by rote out of Puritan sermons. Would it were forgotten that Milton ever was the yoke-fellow of Hugh Peters, the reviler of down-trampled majesty, and the salaried flatterer of Cromwell! Yet, perhaps, it is best that it be not forgotten; for it is good that all men should know that neither the sublimest genius, nor the sternest virtue, can purify the inherent baseness of rebellious faction. Wordsworth, in a better sonnet than Milton ever trumpeted, addresses the soul of his great prototype as "a star that dwelt apart;" alas, that fine poetry should not always be true! For many years it dwelt with all the servile imps which the archfiend rebellion flatters and scorns, with rage—with slander—with sacrilege —with passions that turn our milk to gall—with sundering of domestic charities—with power which sweet religion never sanctified—with the foul despotism of anarchy. I would not be thought deficient in reverence to names that still are mentioned in a breath with liberty. What has been we know—what

might have been, if Charles and his bishops had been allowed to work their will, we can but guess. To the dearest freedom of the human soul, the indefeasible prerogative of conscience, the Episcopalians and Presbyterians were alike hostile. Both presumed to dictate the terms upon which man was to approach his Maker. The question at first seemed to be, whether this tyranny should be exercised by scholars and gentlemen appointed by a court, or by vulgar fanatics, at once the slaves and slave-drivers of the mob. The infallible result of success on either side would have been gross superstition in the multitude, and tacit infidelity in the educated orders. The modern fashion of compromise and concession would have done nothing, for neither party could concede, without a departure from their avowed duty. Unsuccessful war, financial embarrassment, and the ostentatious dissoluteness of the aristocracy and their retainers, only partially corrected by the good example of King Charles, enabled the Puritan leaders to enlist the political discontents of the nation in their quarrel. With true Machiavelian policy, they contrived, by withholding the necessary supplies, in a manner to compel the King to violate the letter of the law. Like the serving-men of the Montagues, they managed to have the law on their side. But ship-money was no more the cause of the Long Parliament's usurpation than the stamp-act was the true origin of American independence. Taxation will never annul the allegiance of a loyal people, unless it directly tends to make the daily bread of life unattainable to

the many. Financial oppression, as long as it only depresses property, will generate nothing but submissive remonstrance. No man will risk his all, because a trifling per-centage is informally demanded. That Charles's imposts were cruel—that they took the food out of the mouths of the poor—was scarcely asserted; nor were we then, nor are we now, such a sordid tribe, as to subvert the state that gives us all we call our own, the church into which we were baptized, because a certain number of shillings were claimed somewhat irregularly. If the pulpits had been silent, the politicians would have been innoxious. Pym and Hampden would have been clever ministers; all necessary reforms would have been easily accomplished, and Cromwell would have lived and died a simple country gentleman, or, at the most, a stammering brawler in an impotent minority. The first fatal error of Charles's reign was his marriage with a French Catholic; the second was his promotion of Laud to the spiritual primacy. Laud should never have left his college. There his learning, his piety, his munificence, would have earned an unenvied admiration. The *congé-d'élire* that made him Archbishop of Canterbury signed his sovereign's death-warrant and his own. Protestant in faith and morals, he was a Papist in taste and feeling; it was his conscientious ambition to erect the clergy of England to a Judaic priesthood, to make the hierarchy a caste instead of a profession. He perceived that this could only be effected by investing the monarchy with a sacerdotal character. He would have the King respected

as a priest, and every priest obeyed as a king. But being better acquainted with the letter of Scripture than with the living operation of the spirit; deeper read in the fathers and schoolmen than in human life; dividing his studies between the past and the eternal; purblind to the present, and vainly credulous of the future; too stubborn in imagined rectitude to conciliate, and yet too milky and gall-less to act up to his own schemes of coercion, he lived and perished to teach mankind, that he who would rule in church or state should be wise as well as good, and not more good than wise. I do not conceive that any thing short of revolution, civil and ecclesiastical, would have satisfied the high-flying republicans; but these were never numerous, and though the multitudinous echo of the city might propagate a delusive preponderance of noise, the still and steady voice of the people was always for Monarchy and Episcopacy. The English are a very loyal nation, and so are the Scotch, and if Charles had left it to the good sense of the latter to fashion their own devotions, perhaps we should now have had uniformity of worship, and no act of uniformity at all; but for his misadventurous attempt to thrust written prayers down the throats of Scotchmen, he would probably have died in his bed, with Laud to furnish his soul for its journey.

Great men have been among us, Ludlow, Hutchinson, and others, that called Milton friend, compared to whom the feeble agitators of modern times are but as the theatrical thunder invented by poor Dennis, to

the real thunder of the angry heavens—men before whom one should tremble, and blush at one's own trembling; whose names shoot terror to the heart of kings, and like a trumpet pierce a nation's ear—men to whom the importunity of weaker nature was a mere argument of austere scorn, a thing unheeded, as a sickly infant, which a stern stepmother bids cry itself to sleep; whose will within their breasts was absolute—how terrible then if evil!—but I am not sorry they lived before my time.

I could hardly have loved them much on earth, nor would I desire a letter of introduction to their souls, wherever they are at present. Methinks, I should have shrunk from their touch, as from the grasp of a marble statue, into which a necromancer had conjured some crafty spirit: for cold they were, and exceeding crafty, as the subtle serpent. But may deathless honour, for which they shed their blood—and, it may be, the blood of better Christians—still attend their names! They did their work; and had they been better, they could scarce have done it so well. They find their reward. May the good they did—and it is great—atone for the means by which they did it; and may we—who live to read the story of their worldly travail, who calmly judge the issues of passions too strong to be confined to single breasts, and coolly wonder at the dark intrigues, the jarring reflections of a king too weak to be honest—of factions that, in their zeal for God, forgot the reverence of truth—for liberty, imposed intolerable bondage—and for the welfare of an abstract commonwealth,

renounced the social charities, which only make a state worthy the support of Christian Man—let us be thankful to Him, who, out of evil, works transcendent good, that such things have been—that they are no more.

But what has all this to do with the British painters? More perhaps, good, impatient reader, than you would think—for the men of whom we speak have been painted; and their effigies throw more light on the transactions of the time than the rolls of Parliament, or the court-sermons, or the would-be-witty pamphlets, and hard-rhymed ballads, that lent a voice to the many-headed monster. Look at Prynne, for instance. It is easier than reading his books—and you will be certain that he was a blockhead—and that his prosecutors were little better when they gave effect to his bray by amputating his ears. Look at Pym—or, if you will, at Hampden—they are not at all alike—for Hampden was a high-born gentleman—and Pym could never cast the puritanical simper with which he came to the door of the House of Commons to receive the women's petition—but if you think either of them an honest man, let me tell you, you are no physiognomist. Look at Charles himself—never did face tell a plainer story. The introverted lustre of his eyes—the patrician gravity of his mouth—the melancholy traces of departed smiles—even the cut of his hair and beard—are history—biography—a confession. Clarendon has told us what he did, and said, and suffered. Vandyke has shown us what he was.

But, oh! that some inspired hand could depict his last, his noblest moments—could pourtray him as he sat before the High Court of Justice, grey-headed, poorly clad—more unattended than the vilest thief—so destitute that none dare pity him—solitary amid the mob of scorners—bereft of fortune, power, and hope—but surrounded with indelible majesty—

> "Not all the water in the wild wide sea
> Can wash the balm off an anointed king!"

What a variety of passions might a great artist introduce upon the scene? The judges should not be made all alike. A cabal of regicides has not the sameness of a pack of hounds. One would display a proud determination to think himself right—another would try not to think at all—a third would look at his partner in iniquity, and dress his countenance according to the fashion. The young, with hungry eyes, would woo the prostitute approbation of the spectators—the old, like a coiled snake, wrapt up within himself, would have no sense but of his own dire purpose. All this might easily be painted. Then there should be a crowd of heads, one peering above another—here a hat, and there a hand held up—and there a foot advanced. But in some quiet nook there should be one good face of silent loyalty—not weeping—not utterly cast down—but upheld by generous admiration of kingly fortitude—and on this face should fall a beam of light, that should seem a meek irradiance of patient virtue. I wish I could paint it myself. But to do justice to the

subject would demand the dramatic powers of a Hogarth or a North, and the sublime conception of Michael Angelo.

There is another subject, taken from the same period of our history, which I would recommend to the attention of sculptors. What think you of a statue of Oliver Cromwell, in the act of turning out the Rump? It should be of Corinthian brass—placed in the most conspicuous situation of St. Stephen's chapel—and should appear, as all good statues and pictures do, to look every member full in the face —with the very expression with which that great radical reformer addressed Harry Morton—"Thou art," &c.

Vandyke was succeeded by Lely, and Lely by Sir Godfrey Kneller—Lely has descended to posterity as the insidious immortaliser of frail beauty, and patrician prostitution—Kneller has bequeathed to staring canvas the long wigs, stars, and garters, that effected and maintained the revolution—we are sorry that Allan has not given us their lives in detail. They have at least as good a right to a place among English artists, as either West or Fuseli—and the lives of men who lived in the busiest epochs of court scandal, must needs abound with anecdote—but anecdote not, perhaps, fitted for a Family Library. Their professional merits are now accounted small. Like the poetry of Pope, and the criticism of Johnson, they are subjected to an Abernethian regimen to cure their supposed plethora of reputation. Having once been praised at the expense of their betters,

they are now depreciated at the expense of justice. But their portraits bear the stamp of truth, and show us how states are governed, and from what Salmacian fountains the defecated blood of nobility is derived.

And here, without spending precious time upon the sprawling saints of Verrio and Laguerre, which it gives me a crick in the neck to look at, or disturbing the pendulous allegories of Sir James Thornhill, we will conclude our commentary on Mr. Cunningham's notices of early art in England, which, in good sooth, is something like a history of the world before the creation of man.

IGNORAMUS ON THE FINE ARTS.

No. III.

HOGARTH, BEWICK, AND GREEN.

THERE are three artists,—but three,—with whose works I can boast of something like intimacy; and they are, perhaps, the most thoroughly and exclusively English in the world. These are Hogarth, Bewick, and Green. However unequal in fame, dissimilar in style, or diverse in their subjects, the trio have many points in common. All, in a manner, self-educated and self-exalted, commenced as artisans, and made themselves excellent artists. All completed their studies, and gathered their materials in their native island, and each, after his kind, represented the Nature which every one may see, though very few like them have perceived and conceived. All, too, by birth or descent, were men of the North Countrie. Only one of them, however, has found a biographer in Allan Cunningham, but both the others have found a panegyrist in Christopher North. At the risk of repeating some of Christopher's observations, which will always bear repetition, I, his humble contributor, will venture a few words on their respective merits, leaving the "invention of their defects"

to Dogberries of greater perspicacity. Green was my friend in days of auld lang syne; and Bewick my delight, when a picture-book was as good as a minced pie, or a pantomime. Pictures were pictures then, indeed.

Green was a man who will not soon be forgotten among the *old familiar faces*, nor will his works want vouchers while Autumn sheds her "blossoming hues of fire and gold" on the ferny slopes of our fells—and the slate-rocks shimmer in the morning sun, after a night of rain—or start from the white dispersing mists, like enchanted towers, at the breaking of the spell of darkness.,, Of all landscape painters he was the most literal, the most absolute copyist of the objects on his retina. What he saw he painted as exactly as it could be painted—he had no notion of supplying the necessary imperfections of art by any adventitious splendour of his own. His memory was not stored with traditional recipes, nor his imagination overlaid with pictorial common-places. The forms, colours, combinations which he fed upon were gathered, like manna, fresh every morning. He never considered how Claude or Gainsborough would have treated a subject, nor what a cockney might think of it. When he set about a picture, he thought no more of any other picture than Nature, when scooping out "still St. Mary's Lake," thought about the Caspian Sea. He did not manufacture the sublime, by leaving out the details, nor sophisticate beauty into prettiness, by turning Westmoreland into a Covent Garden Arcadia, and shepherd lasses into

mantel-piece shepherdesses: neither did he fill our civil kind-hearted valleys with melo-dramatic horrors, and murky caverns, fit only for banditti to skulk in, and for Mrs. Radcliffe to write about. In truth, we have hardly a cavern big enough to conceal a cask of mountain dew,—and what Gray could be dreaming of, when he fancied that Borrowdale Crags would close in and secrete him, like Frederic Barbarossa,*

* "Frederick Barbarossa, according to German tradition, sits within the Kyffhausen, leaning on a stone table, into which his long beard has grown, waiting until the day arrives when he is to hang up his shield on a withered tree, which will immediately put forth leaves, and then happier days will begin their course. His head nods, and his eyes twinkle, as if he slept uneasily or were about to awake. At times his slumber is interrupted; but his naps are generally about a hundred years in duration. In his waking moments he is supposed to be fond of music; and amongst the numerous tales to which his magic state has given rise, there is one of a party of musicians, who thought proper to treat him with a regular concert in his subterraneous abode. Each was rewarded with a green bough, a mode of payment so offensive to their expectations, that, upon their return to earth, all flung away his gift save one, and he kept his bough only as a memorial of the adventure, without the least suspicion of its value. Great, however, was his surprise, when, upon showing it to his wife, every leaf was changed into a golden dollar." —Crofton Croker's Fairy Legends, *London Magazine*, March, 1822.

"Greece revered her yet living Achilles in the White Island, the Britons expected the waking of Arthur entranced in Avalon, and, almost in our days, it was thought that Sebastian of Portugal would one day return to claim his usurped realms. Thus, also, the three founders of the Helvetic confederacy are thought to slumber in a cavern near the lake of Lucerne. The herdsmen call them the three Tells; and say that they lie there in their antique garb in a quiet sleep; and when Switzerland is in her utmost need, they will awaken and regain the liberties of the land."—*Quarterly Review*, No. LXXVII. Do not you know the fine Roman hand?

This legend of Barbarossa (and almost every nation has something similar) has been called an imitation of that proverbial tale of the Seven Sleepers, who retreated to a cave near Ephesus during the persecution of Decius, and, after a nap of one hundred and eighty-seven years, were awakened in the reign of Theodosius, utterly unconscious that they had slept more than a few hours. As usual in these cases, they bestowed their blessing on the unknown descendants of their sometime contemporaries, and expired, as the Milesian canoes, so frequently discovered entire in the bogs of Erin, crumble to pieces as soon as they are exposed to upper air. Like most of the Christian miracles, whether canonical or

in a stony immortality, I for one cannot tell. Mr. Green knew the crags and waterfalls as well as he knew his own children, and was just as little afraid of them. He taught his pencil, too, as he taught his children—to speak the truth, and the whole truth,

apocryphal, this beautiful fancy has been smuggled into the Koran, and there disfigured with clumsy additions. Mahomet was the greatest plagiarist that ever existed; and though marvellously clever, was a very prosaic impostor after all. He had no imagination; and whatever he borrowed from the vast and wondrous stores of Oriental fable, he vulgarised. Like Mr. Hume, he dealt very largely in numerical exaggeration; though it is probable he therein imitated the cabalists, rabbis, and Christian heretics, (who ascribed *mystic* powers and meanings to numbers,) rather than the honourable member for Middlesex.

The falsehoods of fraud, cupidity, and priestcraft, may always be distinguished from the fictions which imagination utters for her *own* delight, from the superstitions which are grounded in the truth of human nature, by their dulness, sameness, and matter-of-fact monstrosity. Yet it is not to be concluded, because the marvellous traditions of far-sundered races often bear a striking resemblance to each other, that they necessarily are derived from one original inventor. Every mythology has its sleepers. Endymion and Epimenides are among the oldest we know of. Who has not read of the *Sleeping Beauty* in the Wood? The seed of these stories is in every fancy; and occasions will arrive to make it shoot forth and blossom. The repose of a fair statue, bathed in moonshine, would readily suggest the loves of the sleeping Endymion and his pale paramour; the rude blocks of stone that people stalactitic caves are quite human enough to give a hint for the caverned slumbers of the Soven, of the Danish Ogier, and the German Barbarossa. Religious or historic faith, in the poetic nonage of nations, would take to themselves the half creations of imperfect vision, and turn the fantastic imagery into saints, martyrs, heroes, or deities.

What a figure would poor Gray, with his face and his pig-tail, have cut behind a stone table in the heart of Eaglecrag. Not much like the *imperial* red-beard, I trow; for he never could have had beard enough for a Mussulman *to swear by*—liberal as he has been in that particular to the Bard. By the way, the British Pindar was more indebted to Hudibras in that passage than to Milton or Raphael either.

> "This hairy meteor did denounce
> The fall of sceptres and of crowns,
> With grisly type did represent
> Declining age of government,
> And tell with hieroglyphic spade
> Its own grave and the State's were made."—*Canto the First.*

I like to laugh at Gray; because I love him. He was a scholar, a gentleman, and a Christian. To detract from his poetic fame, is black ingratitude in any who have read him while their hearts were young.

without regard of consequences. His landscapes convey, not that abstraction which the mind constructs out of many interrupted impressions, and which it can recal at pleasure; not that general likeness, which always remains, and can always be recognised, but a direct corporeal perception in the very posture, circumstance, and complexion of the instant. What his eye told his hand repeated *verbatim et literatim*, as Homer's Iris and Talthybius repeat their message. (I used to love those repetitions when I was at school: it was like sliding glibly down the hill one has been toiling and panting to the top of. The lines counted all the same.)

Hence it requires rather more than a "Fortnight's Ramble" among the lakes—a close and observant acquaintance with all their variable aspects—to know half the merit of Green. Many artists could give a Dutchman, or a Lincolnshire man, or haply a Hampsteadian, a more satisfactory feeling of mountain scenery,—for many exhibit more cleverly what the unexperienced fancy would anticipate of a mountainous prospect; more strikingly pourtray what all mountains have in common, just as the tragedies of Sophocles display the contour and generalities of the passions more distinctly than the mannered dramas of Euripides and Shakspeare: but those who dwell among the scenes which he delineated will daily appreciate him higher and higher;—and should they be divided by seas and shores from this land of peaceful waters, his pictured lines will bring the haunts of memory back upon the soul with the

vividness of a calenture. Artistically speaking (the word is Mr. Green's), the finest natural prospects do not always make the best pictures. Who upon earth could ever paint the bare sea, or the desert, or the infinity of snow? But the smallest cove embosomed in the hills, with its single patch of corn, its low lone cottage, its solitary yew or sycamore, its own wee tarn, and "almost its own sky," has associations too vast to be contained in an acre of canvas. Paint it, and it will only be little, cabined, cribbed, confined, petty,—for a picture cannot be much more than it shows; whereas in nature, the very narrowness of the visible round inspires a latent feeling of unseen greatness, which is a necessary ingredient in the sense of seclusion. Every painted landscape, if it possess the unity essential to a work of art, must make a whole of what in nature is felt and understood to be but a part, perhaps a part as unconsidered, if not as prôminent, as the nose on the face.

In nature we are glad to merge our human individuality in the universal, while in art we demand that everything should be humanised, and refer to man as its centre and solution. We require a meaning, a purpose in every line, and light and shade. I think silvan scenery paints the best of any. In glades and copses, the eye is confined to a small indefinite space, and to a few picturesque objects, which fancy can multiply and vary as it chooses. The effects of light and shadow are strongly marked, and within the reach of imitation. The distance, seen through vistas of trees, or peeping between the

branches, affords a most intelligible perspective. A wood is a sort of natural diorama. Trees, too, are individuals; and being liable to the operations of time, have a poetical sympathy with human life, which in lakes and mountains can hardly be imagined. Figures of men or animals, in a wide landscape, rarely compose well with the massier parts of the picture. If they be conspicuous in the foreground, they change the character of the composition. If far withdrawn from the point of sight, they become obscure and diminutive. Besides, there is no manner of keeping in proportion between any organised body and the huge masses of nature. The poet, indeed, may make a man, or, if he pleases, a bird, commensurate with Chimboraco, or Ontario, because he expresses thoughts and feelings which not the world of matter can circumscribe; but the landscape-painter cannot do this. If he even attempt to give his figures action or expression, he transgresses his province. But human forms combine most happily with mossy trunks and interwoven boughs, with tall flowers and twining creepers, with tangled underwood, and sunny intervals, and grey stones, decked with pendent greenery. Then, what more native to the Dryad's haunts, than the nestling birdies, the hare new startled from her form, or the stag with antlered front, uplifted from the reddening fern, and eyeing securely the lovers met beneath the trysting-tree? Perhaps, moreover, the felicitous intermixture of straight and wavy lines, of disclosure and concealment, of intricacy and simplicity, contribute to the picturesque

in woodland retirements. Scenes again, over which a human interest presides, where the steep is crowned with castle or convent, and the long aqueduct stretches across the vale, and towers, domes, minarets loom in the distance, and the foreground is strewed with broken columns and marble fountains, which nature has taken to herself again, do very well. But where nature reigns alone, and man only appears to show his insignificance, where every portion derives its beauty from the co-presence and co-inherence of the whole, art can do little more than hint at what it cannot do, and present a humble index or chapter of contents to the volume, which can neither be translated nor transcribed. Green has done all for his subjects that could be done, consistently with faithful representation—and he was not the man to belie the magnificent world for the credit of his craft. He loved the truth too well.

No Scottish peasant, in the good old covenanting times, whose bible was his only book and constant companion, could be better acquainted with every chapter and verse, than was Green with every nook of his beloved domain. No height or hollow of Helvellyn, no bay or bosky cape in Winandet's sinuous length, no shy recess, nor brook, nor fairy waterfall in all the hills, but there he oft had been—no idle gazer; but indefatigable with book and pencil, to note their coyest looks and briefest glances. He did not ply his trade in a garret with a sky-light, from hints and scratches, as if he were afraid that nature

would put him out, but face to face with his great mistress,

> "In the broad open eye
> Of the solitary sky."

in the spray of the cataract, beneath the sheltering crag, in the embowered cottage porch, or in the heart of mists, waiting, with impatient resignation, till the vapoury curtains should be withdrawn. He had a hearty, healthy love of his employment, such as none but an honest man could feel or understand. Amid many discouragements, and with no better patron than the mutable public of Lakers—he "bated no jot of heart or hope;" his spirit never flagged, his hand and eye were never idle. He lived in the faith that a time would come when the taste for the picturesque would be no longer an occasional impulse, or fashionable affectation, but a fixed element in the English character; when a permanent colony of rank and intelligence would make of Ambleside another Geneva, and erect a princely pavilion on the shores of Derwent. Pity he did not discover a St. Ronan's Well somewhere convenient—a little nauseous spa-water might have proved more profitably attractive than all the crystal and chrysolite streams in the world. The late Peter Chrosthwaite, some time commander in the Company's service, and latterly the founder of the Keswick Museum, did attempt to establish a medicinal spring; but his favourite pump was not nasty enough to take with the water-drinkers. In Mr. Green's expectations of a Westmoreland Cheltenham, few of the lake poets sympathised. A

kraken would be less monstrous in Windermere than a steam-packet, and it is probable that Lucifer will finish the bridge he once commenced over her breadth (his apron strings broke, and occasioned a pile of stones, which still remain to verify the tradition), before a tunnel is bored through Kirkstone, or a rail-road violates King Dunmail's bones. But Green, though a lover of nature, was no lover of solitude. Like many men, whose occupations condemn them to long silence, he seized eagerly on all opportunities of converse; and as he felt no difficulty in listening to what interested others, he had no scruple in dilating upon what interested himself, and sometimes, it may be, poured much information on the fine arts into unretentive or reluctant ears. But he put the heart into everything; and when the heart is in the discourse, no good man thinks it dull, though it should not chance to be very lucid. I should like dearly to hear my uncle Toby talk of fortification, though I know not the difference between fascines and gazons.

Though never rich, and little beholden to the privileged orders, Mr. Green was a sound unconfutable Tory; therefore a friend to temperate mirth and conviviality, at whose hearth and board no honest face wanted a welcome. Late in the day, when declining health in some degree debarred him from out-of-doors study, he commenced author, with few qualifications, it must be confessed, except a strong love and thorough comprehension of his subject. Ignorant as innocent of the mystery of book-making,

he produced a most amusing, useful, and original book, the only fault of which is, that it is in two volumes; and this fault would be less if the writing had all been his own, but too much space is taken up with extracts from his forerunners, sundry of whom were blockheads, one at least a fool, and not one possessed the tithe of his information. He has not left a place, a rill, a knoll, or homestead unnamed. Many of his observations show a most intelligent and poetical feeling of natural beauty. He is quite free from forced rapture and exaggeration. He never acts the *prôneur* or showman to nature. Perhaps he is rather minute, but condensation is the last thing a practised author learns; and really, when we think of the ponderous quartos that come out every season about third-rate watering-places, and unsavoury fishing hamlets, stuffed with the refuse of apocryphal pedigrees, parish registers, and the Gentleman's Magazine, seasoned with provincial scandal and matter-of-fact antiquarian lies, and embellished with dedicated views of ugly staring houses, we cannot much wonder at a plain man's miscalculating the topographical stomach of the public. But then these books are generally published by subscription, a species of mendicity which there is no society to suppress, but which poor Green could not bring himself to practise. He now sleeps in Grasmere churchyard, and his beloved daughter, the companion of his walks, and assistant of his labours, sleeps by his side. I am afraid he did not live to read the excellent critique on his Guide, written by C. N. himself.—It would have done his heart good.

"O now that the genius of BEWICK were mine,
And the skill which he learn'd on the banks of the Tyne."

And oh, I add, that Bewick had illustrated Peter Bell and the Waggoner—if, indeed, he were not like Hogarth, whose Hudibras and Don Quixote are about as bad as they can be—too peculiar a genius to work on the conceptions of others. Few men, with such wealth of mind, and skill of hand, have exerted their talents in so unassuming a form as the Newcastle woodcutter. As far as I know, all his works are contained in a few books of no great mark or likelihood—books which one might tumble over for hours without the least inclination to read, or even without suspecting that letter-press was a constituent of human happiness. His British Quadrupeds and British Birds (for his lions, and ornithorynchuses, and coatimondis, are no mighty matters) are true natural history; they let you at once into the life and character of the creature, they give you the cream of what its autobiography would be, were it disposed to publish one. The species is contained in the individual. Should Chaucer's Assemblee of Fowles, or Casti's Court and Parliament of Beasts ever meet again, (for their sittings have been suspended longer than those of convocations,) Bewick's are the very burgesses that should be chosen to represent their several kinds. They are not such fixtures of fur and feather as a mere draughtsman could draw from a stuffed skin, or miserable captive pining in the squalid durance of a caravan, nor what a comparative anatomist could compile from the ruins of a dozen different subjects—

No, they are fresh and hearty from the woods, the moors, barn-doors, the stable, the duck-pond, or the warren—all alive as they can be, and looking like themselves. Old Bewick must have sought them in their native haunts, watched them early and late, heard their first chirp in the cold morning twilight, and seen them perched on their dormitory twigs. Perhaps he could have informed Dryden that the little birds do not "in dreams their songs repeat." He must have seen the fox issuing from his hole by moonlight, and the hare weaving quaint mazes on the dewy green. He must have been a spy upon the wooings and cooings, the bitings and fightings, the caterings and feastings of the dwellers of the forest. He was in the confidence of all the animal creation, and knew their ways and humours to a nicety. He is the painter of dumb life and irrational manners. He catches the very lineament in which the specific expression of the kind resides—whether it be the twitch of the tail, the pricking of an ear, the sniff of the nose, the twist of the neck, the leer of the eye, the bobbing of the head, the loll of the tongue, the swell of the ruff, the droop of the wing, or the pout of the breast—yet he never caricatures—never takes off accidental disease or deformity. But the vignettes are better still. There he is a poet—the silent poet of the way-sides and hedges. He unites the accuracy and shrewdness of Crabbe with the homely pathos of Bloomfield. And then, how modestly he slips his pretty fancies to the bottom of a page, as a little maiden sets her sweet-smelling posies and double daisies, and streaked

gilly-flowers, in the odd corners and hedges of the cabbage-garden. Whatever he shows you, you are sure you have seen it before, and wonder that you never noticed it. Be it a cat or a louping-on stane, with back like a camel, and tail like a boa-constrictor —an amorous puppy—a meditative donkey—a ragged sheep picking at a besom—a troop of Savoyards, weary and footsore, tugging pôôr bruin to the next fair—a broken-down soldier, trudging, with stern patience, through the slant rain-storm—a poor travelling woman looking wistfully at a mutilated mile-stone—a blind old beggar, whose faithful dog stops short, with warning whine, on the broken plank that should have crossed the swollen brook—a child playing with a horse's tail, while his nurse is engaged with her sweetheart under the hedge, and his screaming mother is tumbling over the stile—be it but a stone trough under an inscribed ledge of rock, and an ordinary cow drinking, there is the same quiet humour, the same kindly feeling for familiar things in all. There are indeed two objects he occasionally introduced, with good effect, not quite so familiar to every-day eyes, at least in the country. These are the Gallows and the Devil. I know not any artist who has so well embodied our popular notion of "Universal Pan," ΚΕΡΚΟΚΕΡΩΝΥΧΑ-ΣΑΤΑΝ, (a fearful compound is it not? and, like Dante's

"Papo Satan, Papo Satan, Aleppe,"

the better for being untranslatable.) We have all

read Southey's excellent ballad of the Pious Painter, the Fuseli of his time:

"They were angels compared to the devils he drew,
That besieged poor St. Anthony's cell;
Such huge staring eyes, such a damnable hue,
You might almost smell brimstone, his breath was so blue,
He painted the Devil so well."

But will Mr. Southey tell us, that the Catholic limner depicted "the identical curl of his tail" like Bewick? It was not an honest ghost that told him so, even if it were Sir Thomas himself. Yet Bewick lived and died in no great estate, in a smutty provincial town. Perhaps he took his idea of the Black Prince from the Carbonari of Newcastle. From Green and Bewick, all whose works are redolent of country air, let us recede (in a chronological sense) to Hogarth, who would appear from his prints never to have been further from London than the Sir Hugh Middleton, except at an election time. There are some rumours of a trip to Calais, but it was a circumstance he did not like to have mentioned, and truly did him very little credit—so we will forget it for the present.

I believe it was poor Hazlitt who said, that the first reading of Schiller's Robbers was an epoch in his life. I am sure the first reading of Hogarth was an epoch in mine which I hope never to forget. I do not mean the reading of his Analysis, which I once read aloud to the late George Dawe, R.A., as he was painting his large picture of the Eagle and Child, but the perusal of the Marriage-à-la-Mode and Rake's

Progress. The works of other painters are dependent for their effect on a *coup-d'œil*. You should stand at a respectful distance that you may take in the whole at a single view; it is unfair to quote the separate passages; but this mode of viewing Hogarth would never do—you must look at his figures one by one, and then observe the reciprocal action of each upon each, and upon all, in order to judge properly of the composition and subordination of the piece, and this process may aptly be called reading. It was on a rainy Saturday evening, in that time of year and kind of weather that make the closing of the shutters one of the pleasantest events in natural day, when my worthy and revered friend, J—— H——, who, had he not been too happy to wish for greatness, would himself have been a great painter, having kissed his younger children off to bed—settled the ladies at their work-tables, and drawn the extra-strong mahogany round towards the fire—brought down his heaviest and wealthiest portfolio, fraught with original Hogarths. There are none like the originals. I hate to see Hogarth finely engraved—it is worse than the reprints of the old dramatists on hot-pressed slippery paper. I was then a boy, a mere child—and some folks would have deemed Hogarth above my childish comprehension—for there was not—I believe there is not, a Family Hogarth. But H—— had no misgivings of the sort; he kept nothing in his house which the humblest or the youngest member of his household might not look at; and rationally concluded, that what was good and pleasant to himself

could be bad for nobody. Perhaps he thought—I am sure he *felt*—that in all worthy products of true genius there is milk for babes as well as meat for strong men. He instinctively perceived, (he is no great metaphysician, and is far too conscious of the wholesomeness of his feelings to analyze them, as Mr. Death-in-the-Pot Accum advised us to do London porter,) but instinctively he perceived that we never understand the excellence which we have not previously loved, and ever love that best which first awakened our faculties to delight. It is a sore error to keep good books or good pictures from children, because they cannot understand them. No matter how little they understand; let them believe, and love, and enjoy. In another generation, the poor little wretches will not be allowed to pick flowers till they have learned botany. Oh! that Hogarth could rise from the grave to show the incredulous—yet far too credulous world—what sort of animals the Utilitarian all-in-all intellectualists would make of children! It were, indeed, a subject worthy of his pencil. Let the Yankee-Gallico-philosophists work their will in the House of Commons and the Court of Chancery, they can hardly make them much worse than they have been. Let the dead bury the dead. Let Satan commission Mammon to reform Pandemonium; but let not the souls of poor infants be seasoned for sacrifices to the bloody Moloch of Revolution. Leave them to their spectacled dames, their sweet no-meaning ditties, their fairy-tales, and their picture-books, their hymns, and their Catechism; and, as they grow up

like healthy plants, pruned and tended by the careful husbandman, yet winning most vigour and beauty from the light and dews of heaven, let the best of books and of pictures, of all that exalts and enriches the imagination, be fearlessly trusted to their pure capacity and affectionate faith. So will they love true excellence in their riper years, if it be but for the recollections which link their days in natural piety, even as I love Hogarth for the sake of that wet Saturday evening, when thou, Christopher, wert young and lusty as an eagle, and Maga yet was not, and of course I had no notion of being a contributor.

I wish it were possible for me to diffuse over this article a tithe of the unction which shone upon H——'s expositions on that memorable night. A true son of the Emerald Isle, without a taint of orange or green in his complexion, he combined the brilliance of champagne, and the warmth of his compatriot poteen, with the simplicity of water. He did not confine his observations to the human characters, but was most eloquent on the multitudinous still-life, the expressive mugs, chairs and tables, the picture-frames which Hogarth makes perfect historical pictures of, all the baggage and lumber which he never introduces as mere traps for light or lazy beds of shade, but always for a meaning, a purpose, a sympathy with the living actors of the scene. Nor was the moral neglected—J. H—— was both merry and wise, but the best of the moral was himself. What a contrast, yet what an elucidation was his

beaming, honest face, "bright as the moon, that shines upon a murder," to the fearful images of perverted humanity which Hogarth has perpetuated!—What a lesson, worth a hundred homilies—to lift one's eyes from the rake's midnight orgies, with those fiend-like—call them not women—yet beautiful in their fiendishness,—and behold that calm fire-side—those beautiful and delicate domestic labours—that peace and bliss of virtue?

If there be any philanthropist who is disposed to censure my delight in pictures that certainly do not flatter human nature; if any should think that he who would set Hogarth high above every name in British art, or rather would separate him altogether from our painters, to fix his seat among our greatest poets, must be an Ignoramus with a vengeance—let him call to mind his own youthful days, and if he find no passage to plead in my excuse, I pity him—that is all. Not seldom have I heard that none could paint like Hogarth, who had not a corrupt taste or a malignant heart. I once knew a lady—no sentimental painter of pretty sensibilities—no simpering actress of alluring aversions—but a woman of lofty mind and stately person, deeply read in the world and its ways, who, had she not been better engaged as the mother of a Protestant family, might have been abbess to a convent of veiled princesses, combining a more than masculine strength of intellect with all the tact and delicacy of her own sex. This gifted female was piously indignant at Mr. Southey for placing in his visionary Paradise—

"Hogarth, who followed no master,
Nor by pupil shall e'er be approached; alone in his greatness."—*Vision of Judgment.*

To be sure, she was just as angry at the salvation of Handel and of Nelson, and did not approve of English hexameters. Perhaps it is proper for a lady to dislike satirical painting. But Hogarth's censurers, (who, by implication, are mine also,) have not all been ladies—nor yet gentlemen of such pure life and quiet minds as would fain be ignorant that such things as rakes and harlots exist. John Wilkes of the North Briton and Hell-fire Club declares—that "the rancour and malevolence of his (Hogarth's) mind made him soon turn away from objects of pleasing contemplation to dwell and feast a bad heart on others of a hateful cast, which he pursued, for he found them congenial with the most unabating zeal and unrelenting gall." Churchill, one of the bitterest composers that ever abused a strong current of native English, who began with satirizing poor players out of their meagre meed of claps, and did his best to satirize England into rebellion, was so severe on the severity of Hogarth, that he flattered himself his epistle (certainly the cleverest thing he ever did) had broken the old man's heart, and ever since he has been held guilty of the murder on his own confession. Now to me it seems not so strange a thing that a man should die in his bed. Yet, if we are to trust the statements of the benevolent press, the hearts broken by satirists must form a serious item in the bills of mortality. Within the memory of Maga, the deaths of John

Keats, of the Emperor Napoleon, of Queen Caroline, and of Mr. Canning, have been laid to the charge of critics and Tories; to one at least of them Christopher himself has been suspected of being accessory. To out-herod Herod, and "drown the world in tears," I have somewhere read a solemn assertion, that Blucher, some years above four score and ten, died broken-hearted, because the King of Prussia had broken his word!!! Meanwhile, these literary coroners have never hinted that incessant and reckless calumny had any hand in bruising the spirit of Castlereagh, and hurrying him into a self-sought grave. Verily, one might imagine that the Wilkes's and Churchills of the Sabbath breaking hebdomadals were "ever the gentlest of all gentle things." There is nothing new under the sun. Wilkes and Churchill, both of whom deserted their wives, abused Hogarth, the affectionate husband of a lovely woman, because he had not painted A Happy Marriage; and our late revered sovereign was libelled for arriving in Ireland about the time that his consort's funeral furnished the pretext for a London row by ——. But I am poaching on Mr. North's manor.—Wilkes and Churchill, however, had received some provocation—Hogarth certainly struck the first blow, and did not display much science in the close. But Fuseli, who scattered sarcasms as fast as a musician scattered sounds out of an instrument, could have no personal reason for calling Hogarth's productions the "Chronicle of Scandal and the History-book of the Vulgar." Barry, who was at enmity with all the living, could scarce suspect the

dead of conspiring against his life or his fame. Yet he, after damning Hogarth's *little compositions* with faint praise, remarks, "that perhaps it may reasonably be doubted, whether the being much conversant with Hogarth's method of exposing meanness, deformity, and vice, in many of his pieces, is not rather a dangerous, or, at least, a worthless pursuit; which, if it does not find a false relish, and a love of, and search after, satire and buffoonery in the spectator, is at least not unlikely to give him one." It is well that Barry did not add to his objections the old complaint about Hogarth's inelegant style and bad spelling.

I never could bear to hear my friends abused, especially when I have felt the injustice of the attack, without being able directly to confute it. Deeply, therefore, am I indebted to Charles Lamb, who finds or fancies benignity in every work of human wit, for his triumphant demolition of Barry's feeble sophistry. Barry was assuredly no weakling. The man whom Burke thought worthy of good counsel could not be one of the million: but when he acts the amiable, and pipes his eye, he is as disgusting as an overgrown hobble-de-hoy, dressed in petticoats at a school play-acting. How utterly unlike was Jim to Barry Cornwall, the poet of woman, the best of Cockneys! No—not a Cockney at all, but a gentle lover of flowers, soft voices, and delicate smiles, and sorrow sanctified by patience; ever delightful in his own natural vein, and only not successful when he mounts the buskin and speaks big. It is not possible to give due effect to the hailstone chorus on a simple guitar; yet the

guitar is a sweet instrument, and well becomes the lap of lady fair, suspended by a light blue ribbon, (I hate all party colours,) from her flexile neck, which involuntarily keeps time to the turns of the tune— while every note thrills like a casual contact with her transparent moonlight fingers. Who could endure to see the sweet creature take a trumpet and sphere her bias cheeks like fame? Now Barry Cornwall, without the least derogation from his manhood, has a feminine genius—even as Joanna Baillie, without a stain on her womanhood, has a truly masculine genius. Barry Cornwall (if he must write under a feigned name, he might have invented a prettier— Brian Waller, for instance) should remember the first Ode of Anacreon. I have not Mr. Moore's translation at hand. I think I can make a better than Fawke's myself. Ignoramuses and little men are privileged to be conceited.

"Fain would I stir the strings to storm
And every swelling note inform
With a sound of wrath, and a soul of pride,—
Fain would I raise a tempest strong
As the rushing wind that whistles along,
When a thousand knights to battle ride,
And the scabbard rings by its master's side;
Then with stately strains and slow,
Would tell how every steed is still
As if controlled by the silent will
Of the knight that moveless waits the foe.
But no—no—no—
The naughty harp will have its way,
And talks of love, whatever I *can* say:
Long with the wayward chords I wrangled,
And all their pretty prate I strangled;—

At last I fairly crack'd them all,
And marr'd their wilful madrigal;
And then I strung my lyre anew—
'Twas all in vain, it would not do.
The second strings were just as curst,
And wildly amorous like the first.
Nay, then, 'twould surely vex a stoic—
I must have done with themes heroic;
For whether I 'm in love or not,
To sing of love must be my lot.
Oh,—foolish harp—do, like friend Barry—
To cure thy love, I prithee, marry."

And sure enough Barry is married, and I think he has given his lyre to his babe to play with, and the darling has broken the strings, he has been mute for such a long while. Joy to him and his—he won't dislike a joke from an old friend.

By the way, talking of Anacreon, I have a word to say to Mr. Moore. He is a poet that will live as long as there are bright eyes and sweet voices, that is to say, till all the world become puritans or radicals. He is, I deeply believe, capable of greater things than any he has accomplished yet: he is capable of wedding the finest moral feelings to the most beautiful forms of fancy. Whatever in the human soul, and in that wide world which the soul creates out of the impressions of sense, is susceptible of loveliness, is within his reach, but let him beware of putting his Pegasus into a false gallop. She is a milk-white palfrey with rainbow wings. She can skim over the fields without bruising the flowers—dance upon a tea-table without peril to the porcelain—float through the summer air, and drink the dew before it

falls—but let him not try to make a barbed war-horse, or, as I suppose we should call it, a Destrier of her; it will only spoil her paces. When Tom Tit (so his country women affectionately call him) gets into the sublime, he rather ludicrously realises the Pseudo-Falstaff's idea of "thunder to the tune of Green Sleeves." What tune was that? He can tell, I dare say. If he will let kings and emperors alone, they will let him alone. Republican indignation is not his forte. When he essays to be indignant, he appears, what I am sure he is not, spiteful. The present and the coming times are far better for him, and may be better for Ireland, than those ante-historical periods, when "Malachi wore the collar of gold."

What a vernal rhapsody! What an excursion of digression! All sprung from the tiny circumstance of Mr. Proctor's modesty, calling himself Barry. To return—I am always returning, like Halley's comet, which, on the faith of prognostication, is to return about two years hence—Most ably has the incomparable Elia defended his favourite Hogarth, whose Election Feast and Modern Midnight Conversation were the *Penatibus et magnis Diis* of his attics in the temple. And well were you rewarded for your climb up ten flights of stairs, by the sight of them and him. Thanks to his lucubrations, poor Barry's diatribe no longer disturbs my rest. Now, I think not worse of myself for thinking Hogarth my and all men's benefactor. I can affirm, without blushing, that a sight of his prints refreshes my soul, as a rustication in his

native air recruits the vital powers of a valetudinarian, who has got a "day rule from the shades" of a city counting-house. Often, when weary of my own thoughts on a sleepless pillow, have I summoned those pictures before my inward eye, (for I have them all by heart,) copied them, line for line, on the blank darkness—it may be, to exclude worse painting of my own brain—but never did I derive from them an unfriendly feeling towards my kind, never did they shake my faith in the true nobility of human nature, which is ennobled, not by what it is, but by what it should be. So far from it, I affirm that they bear irrefragable testimony to a principle, a moral law in man, that is above the understanding; not begotten upon sense, nor constructed by custom, self-love, or animal sensibility, but implanted by the Divinity as the key and counterpart to the law from on high. "The Spirit beareth witness with our spirit." But Scripture out of Church, as Mrs. Adams well observes, is profane.

Hogarth has, in Mr. Cunningham, an able biographer, a zealous vindicator, and a competent critic. The history of his life is little more than the history of his works. Of his personal adventures Allan has not told us much that is new, because there was not much to tell. Some vulgar anecdotes he has omitted, and others he has obelised. It is rather disappointing that we are not better informed as to the course of our satirist's studies. We don't mean as to how he learnt to paint—but how he gathered his materials. Had he chosen to be his own "reminiscencer," had

he recorded his night wanderings and daily watchings —how he dived into cellars—clomb to garrets—sat sober and keen-eyed as a grimalkin at midnight conversations, and, invisible as a familiar or agent of the Vehmic association, beheld the deeds that shun the unbashful moon-beams; could we follow him to the dens and caverns, unthought of by those that walk above, where daylight never entered, and the reeky tapers are never extinguished; trace him through the labyrinth of London to those thievish corners, those blind alleys, and murky courts, that are farther from the sphere of our sympathies than the coral islands just peering from the flat sea—and then find him in gay saloons and scented ball-rooms, noting among the creatures of fashion, the same weary chase of pleasure, the same restless vacant craving for excitement, that was working misery elsewhere in mephitic gloom, still in a world shut out from nature and self-knowledge, not less in sin if less in felony—we should need no Asmodeus to reveal the secrets of the brick-and-mortar wilderness. We confess we would exchange the Analysis of Beauty, ingenious as it is, for such an analysis of deformity, as Hogarth's "Tours in search of the Picturesque." But he has given us the harvest, and we must be content without knowing exactly how he collected the seed. He must have got into strange scrapes sometimes—but his pencil has only commemorated one—the unpleasant interruption of his antiquarian studies at Calais. He seems to have thought nothing in France worth a sketch, (for surely his Frenchmen are not portraits,)

but an old gate which bore some vestiges of the arms of England. Every one knows how he was arrested as a spy—and sent home in none of his happiest moods. There is more of John Bull than of William Hogarth in his roast beef at the gate of Paris. The beef indeed is very natural. But it was not very generous to ridicule the French for their soup-maigre, and still less just to scoff at their loyalty. It is well if English ridicule did not help to make the French Jacobins. Hogarth never was himself when he drew under the influence of personal resentment. A satirist should always keep his temper, like a pugilist or a chess-player. We can make all allowances for Billy's nationality, but nationality is not patriotism, or it would admire the nationality of other nations. It was excellently observed at a Noctes, that this vulgar trick of laughing at foreigners for their poor living, has mainly contributed to stamp the imputation of gluttony on the English character. Other people eat as much, but nowhere is respectability so apt to be measured by the number of dishes, as in our cities, and perhaps even more, in our country mansion-houses.

What a book might be made of a life of Hogarth on the plan of Godwin's life of Chaucer—which should relate, not what he is recorded to have said and done, but what he must have said and done and seen—the influence which the politics of his time must have had on his genius—and the conversations he must have held with Garrick and Fielding, and Sterne and Johnny Wilkes, (for Johnny and he were

cronies once,) and other bright wits whom his stupid biographers have not mentioned that he ever so much as saw — an unpardonable omission, like that of Chaucer's interviews with Petruchio, and Shakspeare's confabulations with Spenser and Guy Fawkes. Mr. Cunningham is a man of wonderful invention, as his many tales and racy ballads* prove, but through some unaccountable syncope of his faculties, he shows no invention at all in his Lives of the Painters, Sculptors, and Architects, even where, as in the case of Hogarth, Gabriel Cibber, and William of Wykeham, he might have done it with small risk of contradiction. As new editions are rapidly called for,

* Since the days of errant minstrelsy, no man has better caught the fiery spirit of the ancient ballad than Allan Cunningham. These are not, like Moore's, for the concert and drawing-room, the harp and pianoforte, nor altogether, like Burns's, for the rustic ingle and the village merry-night, but for the wild heath and the sea-beaten shore. Surely his youth was passed in communion with ocean—he must have been a companion of old seamen, and familiar with wrecks and storms—he must have known the joy, the gladsome peril of bounding over the billows; for, except Dibdin's, I knew not any sea-songs comparable to his. But Dibdin's are the songs of modern tars, excellent in their kind, but still the songs of pressed or hired sailors. Allan's belong to the wild dwellers of the waters, to pirates, such as they were when privacy was held in honour—to the Robin Hoods of ocean, to Scandinavian sea kings; or to men of later days, whom grief, or civil strife, or secret crimes, have made strangers to the dry land of their country. Dibdin's jolly crew refresh themselves in port, drink their grog, and pay for it out of their prize-money; their sweethearts and wives are such as poor men's wives are, or may be; and their acquaintance with the element is in the way of business; but Allan's rovers hide their vessel in the sheltering creek, and revel in the wave-worn cavern, frighting the sea-birds from their haunts above; their paramours are ladies of ocean, sea nymphs, with white garments and dark locks, dishevelled to the wind, or decked with jewels won in climes afar. They sympathise with the tempests, and claim a brotherhood with the guiding stars. Dibdin's sailors are far honester fellows, but Allan's are more imaginative. They do not harmonise with the present order of things; and it must be confessed that there is a little confusion of times, both in the diction and in the circumstances of Mr. Cunningham's narratives, which reminds us of the converted Scribe, "who brought out of his treasure things *old and new*."

I hope he will take a well-meant hint, and exert himself.

The outstanding facts of Hogarth's life are too well known for repetition, and, except as connected with his works, furnish little occasion of comment. Though body and soul a Londoner, he had Westmoreland blood in his veins. His uncle was a Troutbeck poet—the tragœdididdscalos of the Fell-side. Philosopher Walker remembered the representation of the "Siege of Troy," much after the fashion of the ancient mysteries—yet not without some approaches to the choral and dithyrambic elements of the Greek drama. The narrative is worth transcription: After speaking of auld Hogarth's Songs, which seem to have been of a satirical cast, "and were said to have a greater effect on the manners of the neighbourhood, than even the sermons of the parson,"—the philosopher continues, "But his poetical talents were not confined to the incidents of his village; I myself have had the honour to bear a part in one of his plays; I say one, for there are several of them extant in MS. in the mountains of Westmoreland to this hour.

"This play was called the Destruction of Troy; it was written in metre, much in the manner of Lopez de Vega and the early French Drama. The unities were not too strictly observed, for the siege of ten years was all represented; every hero was in the piece, so that the dramatis personæ consisted of every lad of genius in the whole parish. The wooden horse; Hector dragged by the heels; the fury of

Diomed; the flight of Æneas, and the burning of the city, were all represented. I remember not what fairies had to do in all this; but as I happened to be about three feet high at the time of this still talked-of exhibition, I personated one of these tiny beings. The stage was a fabrication of boards placed about six feet high on strong posts; the green-room was partitioned off with the same material; its ceiling was the azure canopy of heaven, and the pit, boxes, and galleries were laid into "one by the great Author of nature," for they were the green slope of a fine hill. The exhibition was begun with a grand procession from the village to a great stone, (dropped by the devil about a quarter of a mile off, when he tried in vain to erect a bridge over Windermere; so the people, unlike the rest of the world, have remained a good sort of people ever since.) I say, the procession was begun by the minstrels (Anglicè, fiddlers) of five parishes, and followed by a yeoman on bull-back. You stare—stop, then, till I inform you that this adept had so far civilised his bull, that he would suffer the yeoman to mount his back, and even to play the fiddle there. The managers besought him to join the procession; but the bull, not being accustomed to much company, and particularly to so much applause, whether he was intoxicated with praise, thought himself affronted and made game of, or whether a favourite cow came across his imagination, certain it is that he broke out of the procession, erected his tail, and, like another Europa, carried off the affrighted yeoman and his fiddle over hedge and

ditch, till he arrived at his own field. This accident rather inflamed than depressed the good-humour of the procession; and the clown, or Jack Pudding of the piece, availed himself so well of this incident, that the lungs and ribs of the spectators were in manifest danger. This character was the most important personage in the whole play, for his office was to turn the most serious parts of the drama into burlesque; he was a compound of Harlequin and the Merry-Andrew, or rather the arch-fool, of the ancient kings." So far the ingenious inventor of the Eidouranicon. It must be added, that this Troutbeck tragedy was represented, like the Œdipus Coloneos of Sophocles, after the author's death. Now really, bull and all, it is very Grecian and antique; and I question whether the performance of Thespis were more in accordance with the rules of Aristotle. Such were the beginnings of the drama in all countries—in Troutbeck, I am afraid that such was the end. If the Bannatyne Club ever step over the Border, they should institute a search after those MS. plays above mentioned—though, it is to be feared, they have shared the fate of those that perished by the carelessness of Mr. Warburton's servant—no, in good sooth, by the abominable carelessness of Mr. Warburton himself.

While treating of Hogarth's Westmoreland connexions, we may as well clear up a point which his biographers have dashed with much dubiety. His orthography, or rather heterography, has been a subject of keen animadversion; and he has been charged

with misspelling his own name, or at least softening it down to please his wife. An early print inscribed William Hogart, and a couplet in Swift's Legion Club,

> "How I want thee, humorous Hogart,
> Thou, I hear, a pleasant rogue art,"

are brought to prove that the final H was an unwarrantable innovation. Now, it so happens that the name is common in the north at this day, and is always spelt Hogarth, but pronounced Hogart. Any one passing by the shop of Mr. Hogarth at Keswick, druggist, and sub-distributor of stamps, may resolve his doubts on this important subject. As for Swift's rhymes, I wonder how any of the living artists would like to have their names submitted to such a criterion. Exempli gratiâ—

> "How I like thee, humorous Wilkie,
> Thou art never in a dull key—"

Or,

> "No mortal man can shave enough
> To look as smooth as Steffanoff,
> And softest maids are quite outfaced all,
> By softer men composed of paste all,
> By magic hand of Richard Westall."

Richard Hogarth, father to the painter, was a brother of auld Hogarth, the Troutbeck dramatist. He seems to have been one of those men with whom scholarship was quite a passion; for he tried to teach a school in the north—failed—went to London—by what inducement biographers tell not—kept a noisy, unprofitable school for a while—then, in the

very humility of love to letters, was a corrector of the press; and, amid all his difficulties, compiled a supplement to Littleton's dictionary, which, it appears, no bookseller would publish. We have just set forth the number of standard works which were denied to their accounted authors, to console the ghost of William Hogarth. Richard Hogarth, the father, may find consolation in the similar misfortune of a king. Some work or other of King James's was actually thought heavy by the trade.

Thus writes Thomas Lydiat, the antagonist of Scaliger in chronology, in a letter addressed to Usher, but seemingly meant for his Majesty's own perusal. "I have sent you the king's book in Latin against Vorstius-Vorstius, yet scant dry from the press, which Mr. Norton, who hath the matter wholly in his own hands, swore to me he would not print, unless he might have money to print it—a sufficient argument to make me content with my manuscript lying still unprinted, unless he equivocated. But see how the world is changed. Time was when the best book-printers and sellers would have been glad to be beholden to the meanest book-makers. Now Mr. Norton, not long since the meanest of many book-printers and sellers, so talks and speaks as if he would make the noble King James, I can well say the best book-maker of his own, or any other kingdom under the sun, be beholding to him."

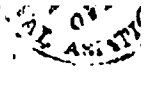
There is something to me far more affecting in the unrepining privations and unexciting industry of humble scholars, than in all the celebrated sufferings

of poets and artists. Poor Richard did not live to see his son a great man, or to see his own prophecies frustrated; for doubtless he augured ill of a lad that did not take to his Latin, but wasted time and paper in ornamenting his capitals with lines of beauty, and caricaturing his master and schoolfellows. William, by his own account, was outstripped in all scholastic exercises by "dunces with better memories," and nothing could be done with him but to bind him apprentice to old Ellis Gamble, a respectable silver-plate engraver in Cranbourn Alley. If we are to believe his posthumous memorials, he had learned from his father's case that learning is not most excellent, and desired an employment that secured him honest bread; but little reliance is to be placed on the *ex post facto* reasons which old men assign to the tastes of their youth. Certain it is, that in his boyhood, no encouragement or facilities were afforded to youthful prodigies, who thought themselves predestined artists; and when, in his riper years, the Society of Arts proposed to puff every spark of genius to a blaze, by premiums and exhibitions, he ridiculed the design with more good sense than good nature. He owed nothing to patronage, and little to instruction, and perhaps underrated all in art that can be taught or learned. For the educated eye, that sees by rule, for the unerring hand, that unites with the freedom of volition the exactness of fine clockwork, he had little respect; the merely imitative skill for which the Dutch masters are so famous, appeared to him as mean as the trade of a tapestry weaver;

and the most faultless work that an observance of academic precepts could produce, he probably thought no better than the crests and ciphers, the chevrons and lozenges, which he executed in the service of Ellis Gamble. Lines and colours he esteemed but as lines and colours, whether they chanced to signify saints and goddesses, or only Gules and Azure. Born and bred in a great city, he had little opportunity of imbuing his mind with the grander forms of nature. London never had much architectural beauty to boast; and whatever works of art are there possessed, were for the most part religiously kept aloof from the eye of youth and poverty. To this day, it may be said, that the majority of the English population have never seen a fine picture, while the galleries and churches of Italy are open to all, and the very forms and faces of the Florentine and Roman women are insensibly modelled to the grandeur of Michael Angelo, the grace of Raphael, the luxury of Titian, and the sweetness of Correggio.

An Englishman of the present time may see fine figures and beautiful countenances in every street; but in Hogarth's pupilage, and long after, not only was grace, ease, and natural motion precluded by the absurdity of costume, but the preposterous style of head-dress, and the abomination of paint and patches, disguised the original contour of the features, and showed the whole town in a mask. Add to this, that Hogarth's Indentures must have excluded him from those circles where refinement of manner gives a certain charm to the artificial, and reconciles the eye,

if not the heart, to the absence of nature, and we shall not wonder that his genius, inclining him strongly to represent the world he saw, took the turn of graphic and dramatic satire, even had he possessed the ability to portray that fairer attitude of things which imagination sees through Love, and, by loving, makes real.



A MODEST DEFENCE OF PORTRAIT PAINTING.

HOGARTH, in his Frontispiece to the Artists' Catalogue, 1761, has committed a very whimsical bit of allegorical testiness. From a lion's head, surmounted by a bust of King George the Third, there issues a stream of water (meant to indicate the royal bounty) which flows into a watering-pot—nothing more nor less; from which watering-pot a pretty, plump, neat-looking grisette (such as we may see similarly employed in the suburban garden-plots, that indicate the inextinguishable love of nature of the Cockneys,) is watering three intertwining shrubs; one leafy and flourishing—the others bare, stunted, and moribund. Now the pretty damsel, whose robes succinct are tucked up in a way that shows she is used to dirty streets, we are to call Britannia; and the three plants, on which she is pouring the fluid favours of Majesty, are inscribed, Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture: the last is in good condition, but Painting looks as miserable as Wordsworth's thorn—all except one single branch, which has withdrawn the sap and sustenance from its parent stem, and starved its

brother branches, each of which is higher than itself. This monopolising bough is Portrait Painting.

Hogarth was an awkward flatterer, and seldom succeeded in allegory; but his satire is not often misapplied, and hardly ever feeble. In this instance, however, his shaft may be fairly described as *imbelle sine ictu*. He seems to have fallen into a common error—that the patronage of portrait starves the higher and more inventive branches of art; a notion sufficiently confuted by the fact, that Titian was a portrait painter. In truth, it was the desire to preserve the lineaments of eminent individuals that first brought painting to Britain. The value we set on our friends' faces and our own, enables artists to live, while they are acquiring the skill to execute their poetic conceptions; and to suppose that the taste for individual likenesses produced an insensibility to general beauty, is as absurd as to ascribe to the annuals and other periodical publications, the lack of profound erudition in our modern literature.

Yet many are there at this day, malcontents in art, and sons of Zoïlus in criticism, who decry portraiture as a wen, a fungus, a parasitical sucker, a pampered menial, a slave, that has usurped dominion over its master; as a poor, base, sordid, mechanical, bowing, cringing, interest-making, money-getting handicraft! Ay, money-getting!—there 's the rub!

Let us hear the testimony of Johnson, who, in matters that come home to the business and bosoms of men, was seldom wrong; and only erred when comprehensive imagination and subtile philosophy

were required. Hence he was one of the best critics of manners, and worst of poetry, that ever existed. "Genius is chiefly exerted in historical pictures; and the art of the painter of portraits is often lost in the obscurity of the subject. But it is in painting, as it is in life—what is greatest is not always best. I should grieve to see Reynolds transfer to heroes and goddesses, to empty splendour and to airy fiction, that art which is now employed in diffusing friendship, in renewing tenderness, in quickening the affections of the absent, and continuing the presence of the dead. Every man is always present to himself, and has therefore little need of his own resemblance; nor can desire it, but for the sake of those he loves, and by whom he hopes to be remembered. This use of the art is a rational and reasonable consequence of affection; and though, like all other human actions, it is often complicated with pride, yet even such pride is more laudable than that by which palaces are covered with pictures that, however excellent, neither imply the owner's virtue, nor excite it."

But is it true that the portrait is a work of mere mechanic dexterity, in which the hand and the eye alone are employed; and all that constitutes the man in man is out of office? A portrait may be produced mechanically, as an air may be composed—by rule, and rote, and memory; but it may safely be assumed that a good portrait cannot be painted, without some of the best talents of the poet and of the philosopher. It does not indeed demand the fancy, the invention,

the constructiveness, that enter into the composition of an epic, a tragic, or a comic picture, but these are faculties which many poets, of no trivial name, have either not possessed, or never exerted. But if it be a function of philosophy to discover, amid the ceaseless flux of phenomena, the permanent, the essential, the ideal—to form abstractions which are not mere words, but the bonds and regulations of true knowledge; if it be the business of a shaping imagination, to invest such abstractions with an appropriate body, and congruous circumstances; to bestow a vital unity, organised in coherent members—if to arrest a moment, and make it an adequate symbol of a total being, be the more peculiar constituent of pictorial genius, then we say, that the man who delineates a satisfactory likeness, even of an undistinguished child of earth, proves that he has evoked and educated the finest powers of his intellect.

Perhaps these positions require to be applied and illustrated, in order to be intelligible. It must be observed, that, to draw the living person, even with technical accuracy, is a very different thing from copying a picture, which may be done by rule and measurement. In the picture, not only is all that belongs to proportion and perspective ready made, but the aspect is unchangeable; the copyist may work and look again, and inquire of his model, and receive the same invariable faithful answer. But copying will go but a very little way with a human countenance; there a novice might look and look, and be so far from getting his lesson by heart, that

he will find each previous impression impaired and modified by the succeeding. He will not be able to note down one feature in just keeping, and will probably throw the blame on the restlessness of the sitter; and at last either produce a plan instead of a portrait, or such an anarchy of lineaments as it would have puzzled Munden to realise. The fact is, that the representative image, the impression on the brain, which corresponds with each person of our acquaintance, is abstracted from many continuous or successive acts of vision; and may probably be different in different individuals, according to the perfection of their organs. But as the substratum to these uncertain representatives, there must be an intelligible, and therefore, communicable form; which the portrait painter transfers to the canvas. He will paint you—not as you do look at this or that particular time—but as you must, and ought to look to answer the best possible idea of yourself. This is what Vandyke, Lely, Reynolds, and Lawrence have done, for the great and the fair of their respective ages.

Much is said about the vanity of plain-looking, insignificant people, sitting for their pictures, as if, forsooth, anybody was insignificant by his fireside; or as if we could have no affection for our friends' visages or our own, without fancying them handsome. Or suppose we did, it is one of the most harmless of mortal errors. Imaginary beauty breeds far kindlier feelings than conscious ugliness. It were well if all could believe themselves comely, till they are content to be otherwise. But the philosopher, the feeling

investigator of human nature, who loves his species as the children of his Almighty Parent, and therefore thinks all that belongs to man important and interesting, will form a very different opinion. He will not despise the meanest sketch, profile, or outline, that presents an human face; he will smile benignantly at the veriest daub that ever stared from the smoky walls of a club-room—if it represent an honest man; for he cannot but know that there are, or have been, some of his fellow-creatures to whom it was dear. Were the *Jus imaginum* limited, as at Rome, to the great and noble, not only would many worthy citizens, limners, oilmen, colourmen, dealers in canvas, &c., be deprived of their bread, but a vast store of innocent pleasure would be lost to good people; and what is worse, our hearts would miss many profitable hints and salutary influences. We are all too apt to forget the absent and the dead, and yet, did we keep them in our thoughts, from how much evil would they preserve us! How many things should we do—how many should we leave undone, if but once a day, for one short quiet space, a departed mother, a friend, a sister, that is far away, in silent visitation communed with our souls. Who, that bears his true love's token in his bosom, even in a foreign land, would break his plighted faith? Who, with his father's picture looking from his walls, would disobey that father's parting charge? Could he, who had changed bibles with his sweetheart, ever be an infidel?

Hence the value of all art, all means and instru-

ments that make the absent present—constructing in sense itself a counterbalance to the despotism of sense: as letters, keepsakes, crooked sixpences, bibles mutually given and received, braided locks of hair, busts, portraits, and epitaphs.

THOUGHTS ON HORSEMANSHIP.

BY A PEDESTRIAN.

"In brave pursuit of honorable deed,
There is, I know not what, great difference
Between the vulgar and the noble seed,
Which, unto things of valourous pretence,
Seems to be born by native influence,
As feats of arms and love to entertain,
But chiefly skill to ride, seems a science
Proper to gentle blood."

SPENSER'S *Faëry Qucene*, B. ii., c. 4., s. 1.

To assert his sovereignty over the inferior animals; to overtake the swift, to overreach the crafty, and to overmatch the strong; to extirpate the noxious, and to subdue and appropriate the useful, is the primitive study—the earliest ambition of man. What necessity dictates to the barbarian, the vigorous progeny of cultivated life pursue for convenience, pride, or pleasure. The chase, in its various forms of hunting, fishing, fowling, falconry, &c., is a powerful instinct, that seems originally planted in all healthy males; nor are the softer sex entirely free from its influence. The huntress Diana has many a votaress to this day; and her sylvan sport is far more envied than her immortal celibacy. True it is, that the sedentary occupations of the poorer citizens, the intellectual

abstractions of a few, the indolent indulgences of others, the scruples of some, the weakness and timidity of more, co-operate with want of leisure, and aristocratic regulations, to extinguish this natural tendency in the greater number of a civilised nation. But wherever instinct remains in force—in the boy, the rustic, and the country gentleman—the passion for field sports is as strong as ever; and poets, philosophers, statesmen, and divines, may be found among their staunchest devotees. A healthy boy, bred up in the country, will always be a sportsman as soon as he is out of petticoats. Though the gun is not to be touched, he shoots perseveringly with those truly British weapons, the bow and arrow; and if a sparrow fall, he is as proud as Apollo Belvedere. Perhaps the foxhounds are unattainable; he can only hear the harriers at a distance, and his mamma has told him that the other dogs are vulgar. Still "rats, and mice, and such small deer," are his free warren; and he hunts poor puss about the garden, as perseveringly as the beatified followers of Odin pursued the boar in the Scandinavian Paradise; even Izaak Walton might commend the patience with which he holds a crooked pin in the uninhabited fishpond. There is no cruelty in this; it is the same instinct that drove the beasts of prey into deserts and forests, and made room for agriculture, social security, arts and knowledge.

But to possess animals—to keep them alive, is still better than catching and destroying them. An octogenarian raven—a miserable owl, set out of pure

kindness against a south wall at noon—a magpie, that can say "what's o'clock?"—even a guinea-pig, the most unintellectual of the four-footed creation, are valuable property. White mice have produced as violent feuds in a little family, as white elephants among the princes of farther India. Monkeys are more respected than the generality of poor relations; but cats are doomed to share the irreverence too frequently bestowed on female eld. Yet they are favourites with little maidens, and with embryo poets; for poets, however manly in courage and intellect, have always something feminine both in their virtues and their weaknesses. But the youth that has a pony,—of his very own—or even a free admission to his father's stable—go to, he is happier than he is like to be ten years hence.

There is nothing with which the pride of man so strongly connects itself as with the mastery and management of that noble animal the horse; nothing so humiliating as to be a bad jockey. In martial ages, the term horseman is synonymous with gentleman. Hector is honoured by the epithet horse-breaker. The word chivalry, which implied all that was noble in blood, comely in accomplishment, and valiant in deed; all that a king should honour, and a lady love,—might, if the sense of words were to be sought in their etymology, be used to characterise the pursuits of the ostler, the farrier, the groom, and the horse-courser. The *Equites* were the gentry of Rome and Athens. Whole tribes in Asia, and even in South America, where the horse is not

indigenous, almost live upon horseback, and esteem the print of a man's foot in the earth as a mark of degradation. From the roving Arab, whose unshod steed scarces leaves a trace in the sand, to the graceful chevalier, whose trained courser, proud of its burden, treads the ground with step elastic, and disdainful as a haughty dame, all degrees of men have their horse-vanity; even those who cannot back the staidest pad that ever grazed in the churchyard, indulge it in imagination. Pope, most likely, was never on horseback in his life; yet hear how the little man talks:—

"The impatient courser pants in every vein,
And, pawing, seems to beat the distant plain;
Hills, vales, and floods, appear already cross'd,
And, ere he starts, a thousand steps are lost.
See the bold youth strain up the threat'ning steep—
Rush through the thicket—down the valleys sweep;
Hang o'er their coursers' heads, with eager speed,
And earth rolls back beneath the flying steed!"

Soul of Byron! who shall dare to say that Pope was no poet? Why, Alexander the Little!—have none of the heroes of the Dunciad forestalled the *sobriquet?*—is as mighty as his *great* namesake on Bucephalus. Every man who enters fully into the spirit of poesy is a poet, though he be incapable of composing a couplet. He that listens with delight to symphony or song, and apprehends the meaning and purport of the successive strains, perceives the unity amid the infinite variety, the involution and evolution of harmonious elements, has surely music in his soul, though he have none in his voice or fingers. Why,

then, am not I an equestrian,—though John Gilpin, Braggadocio, or Goose Gibbie, were Ducrows compared to me on corporeal horseback—inasmuch as I thoroughly apprehend the beauties, graces, and expressive terms of the manège, and feel any violation of propriety in these respects as keenly as a note out of tune, or a figure out of drawing? If a silent poet be not a contradiction, why should a pedestrian chevalier?

It is common enough to ride well, but to ride poetically is a very rare accomplishment,—never attained by any but such as to a strong natural sense of beauty and fitness, unite a vigorous mind in a vigorous body; *mens sana in corpore sano.* That this union of requisites is only to be looked for in noble families, is an assertion better timed in the age of Spenser and Elizabeth, than in that of William the Fourth. But in no age can it exist without refinement—without a certain cultivation of habits—a selection from vulgar associations: the mere cultivation either of the intellect or of the muscles will not suffice. Anybody who can ride hard and long, without danger or excessive fatigue, may be said to ride well. The butcher's boy, on his bare-backed bit of blood and bone, with the præmonitory halter by way of bridle, knees drawn up to serve as a support to the tray, on which the cleaver rings a martial accompaniment, imitative of blood and slaughter, rides well. The apothecary, whose interest requires that, whether he have any business or none, he should always be in a hurry, rides well; his

trunk forming a very acute angle with his horse's neck, and the instruments in his coat-pockets having a truly alarming jingle. Tailors—notwithstanding the vulgar prejudice to the contrary—are the best riders you will see of a Sunday within two miles of town. Huntsmen, postillions, rough-riders, livery-stable men, blacklegs, all ride well; that is, well enough for themselves, and too well to benefit mankind by affording a hearty fit of laughter; but so far from furnishing poetical pictures, they make the beautiful creature which they bestride, dull, prosaic, or ridiculous.

Again: no gentleman should ride too well; he should not, like certain painters, create difficulties for the sake of showing how dexterously he can overcome them; nor should the art or strength whereby he guides his steed be palpable to sight: it should appear as if the simple will did all. Riding *à la militaire*—the modern heroic poetry of horsemanship—is very imposing when used by a man of military appearance, in a military dress; but should never be attempted by Dissenters, clergymen of the church of Scotland, aldermen, or respectable burgesses. Steeple-hunting, fox-hunting, &c., which correspond to the Pindaric or dithyrambic styles, are doubtless very animated, and delightfully free from the snaffle of common sense. Dramatic racing, (such as is practised by Ducrow and others) though a beautiful—and in him, performed by a man of imagination—an intellectual art, is not much to be studied by the nobility.

A swan on the water is not so graceful a vision as a lady-like female on a lady-like palfrey. Yet there are not many women whom it is pleasant to see on horseback. If they display too much courage and adroitness, they are in danger of being unsexed: if they be timid and inexperienced, one trembles for their gentle limbs. I wish some court painter would contrive a more agreeable costume for ladies to ride in. On an absolute girl, whose spirits are ethereally brilliant, and whose complexion is of the morning, the round hat and habit are not far amiss; though even by Hebe or Aurora, the habit should never be worn except on horseback. But for a woman of a certain age, the hood and shirt adopted by our grandmothers in the days of the pillion, if not more picturesque, were undoubtedly more matronly.

These observations are not directed to such females as ride solely for health or amusement; but those who wish to exhibit had better do it well than badly, for the credit of nature and the advancement of the fine arts, which include not only poetry, painting, sculpture, music, architecture, acting, &c., but riding, walking, eating, dressing, and shuttlecock playing.

A NURSERY LECTURE DELIVERED BY AN OLD BACHELOR.

A WHIMSICAL old bachelor acquaintance of mine—less wit than humourist, more pedant than either; whose tediousness is tolerated by men who like their naps after dinner, because he can talk without listeners; and his ugliness endured by women who are mothers, because he is rather fond of babies—maintained, a few days ago, with a paradoxical gravity of countenance peculiar to himself, that the common playthings of children are all derived from the first ages of the world, and were originally of a religious or commemorative character.

Of the ninepins, he remarked, that nine had ever been a mystic number, much regarded in magical operations and cabalistic lore; that it was the square of three, and the number of the Muses; that the Fates, the Furies, and the Graces, make up exactly nine; that nine, multiplied by seven, a like numerical mystery, produced the grand climacteric sixty-three. He was disposed to think that the ninepins were intended by the ancient sages to represent Time, whose triple denominations of Past, Present, and Future, are continually involved, and, as it were,

multiplied into each other; while the spherical form, and the solidity of the bowl, clearly figured eternity, by which the divisions of time were to be finally supplanted. He referred the invention of the game to the Celtic bards and Druids, whose leashes of triads are well known to the Cymrodorion society, and who taught the transmigration of the soul through nine cycles of existence, before it attained perfection. The wooden rocking-horse was an invaluable document, confirming the descent of the aboriginal Britons from a remnant of Troy. The poor infant's coral he condemned as useless, heathenish, and popish; useless, because all animals except man, and possibly the hammer-headed shark, cut their teeth without it: heathenish and popish, inasmuch as it was nothing more than the *Fascinum*, or amulet of Pagan Rome, worn by the ancients to avert fascination, with the addition of bells, those tintinnabular terrors of Satan, whose thaumaturgic sound, as holy friars have told, could disperse a coming thunder-storm, make the air wholesome, and procure a safe passage for the parting soul. The rattle, though not, to his knowledge, ever patronised by the Church of Rome, was of classic sanctity, being much used in the rites of the Syrian goddess, and of the mother of the gods; it was the *crepitaculum* of the towered Berecynthia, and the *crotala* of the inexorable Nemesis. (This piece of learning he gleaned from the notes on Childe Harold, canto the fourth.)

"The literature of the nursery," he continued, waxing so earnest that I suspected him of being half

convinced by his own irony, (as some, by feigning sleep, have sunk into a sincere snore,) "the literature of the nursery has every mark of extreme antiquity; an antiquity far beyond the reach of chronology, or written records. Oral tradition, a musical accompaniment, a quaint simplicity of phrase, a number of allusions to forgotten circumstances; a variety of readings (the *variæ lectiones* in the metrical romances of 'Old Father Long-legs,' 'Jack a Malory,' &c., would fill a respectable sheet in the Museum Criticum); a prevalence of the supernatural; combined with those little details of familiar and domestic things, which make the Odyssey so interesting; above all, the utter uncertainty—nay, the absence of so much as a rumour, as to the author of those truly popular compositions — these are characteristics that can meet only in productions of the remotest era; such as our lullabies, nurses' songs, and dandling ditties, unquestionably are. The very rhythm and melody of the verse bespeak them of the time when music, dance, and poetry went hand in hand. The air is strictly imitative; that is to say, significant, which can scarce be said of modern music in general.

"Then, what poetry is so universally diffused as these ancient strains—these lilting lays—these soft and slumberous rocking rhymes? How many thousands, even in this educated generation, never heard of 'Paradise Lost,' or the 'Fairy Queen!' but who is unacquainted with 'Jack Horner,' and little 'Tom Tucker?' Who has not sympathised with the

sorrows of 'Billy Pringle?' How circumscribed is the fame of Pegasus and Bellerophon, to that of the 'Cow that jumped over the moon.' So intimately intertwined are these madrigals with the fibres of the brain, that it is not without effort we remember that they must all have been made at some time by somebody.—We rather deem them like the song of birds, 'a natural product of the air.'

"I know that, in this printing age of ours, several collections of these poetical antiquities have been published by 'the trade.' I have been applied to myself by an eminent London house to superintend an edition of the 'Poetæ Minimi,' the Muse in swaddling clothes, with notes, illustrations, and prolegomena; and as a specimen I have actually seen the moral ballad, 'Three children sliding on the ice,' and the spirited dithyrambic, 'Ride a cock-horse,' in the original Greek. But I think these effusions should never be printed. They were originally derived from an age anterior to letters; and they still pertain to the unlettered part of human life. To see them in types is like looking at a glow-worm in the sun. But, what is more lamentable, there is a profuse issue of new-fangled nursery-books, meretriciously tricked out with gaudy coloured prints, and bearing internal evidence that they are manufactured by gentlemen of the press. Surely, as 'the world is all before them' where to do mischief, they might let the babies alone. Everything now-a-days must be done by the press, or the steam-engine, and all by wholesale. Ere long the cradle will be banished

from the fireside, like the spinning-wheel; and the rising generation will be consigned from their birth to national establishments. Suckling of infants will be exploded, as unproductive labour. Pap will be made by contract in subscription soup-kettles. A single engine will put in motion as many cradles as spindles; and official nurses, appointed by the committee, will sing 'Songs of Reason' to the grinding of a steam apollonicon. Yet, notwithstanding the unquiet innovations of your all-in-all educationists, who would make your little ones read before they can well speak, spoiling their dear lisp with abominable words; which, poor things, they pronounce so right, it is heart-breaking to hear them,—cramming them, it may be, with the theory of animal mechanics, when they should be feeling their life in every limb —there is still, thank heaven, and the kind, sensible hearts of English mothers, a genial feeling of old times about a nursery. 'When I see a numerous small family at play, my mind sinks back, through dream and vision, to the world's infancy. In the life, the innocence, the simple bliss before me, I hail a something that is not changed. The furniture of the well-littered play-room reminds me of Chaldæa, Egypt, Etruria, and the Druids; so that, were it not for the rosy faces of the darlings, and the grisette prettiness of the prim, smiling nurse-maiden, with her ringlets just out of paper, peeping so alluringly from beneath her coiffure of curious needlework, which, though very winsome, is not strictly classical, I might imagine myself in the Museum of the

Antiquarian Society, of which I have the honour *not* to be a member; while the strange and affecting analogy between childhood, as it still appears, and what we conceive of man, in the simple days of yore, 'when human hope was bold and strong, nor feared the cold rebuke of memory,' oft-times gives rise to reflections which leave me better acquainted with myself, and with kindlier feelings towards my species.

> 'The child is father of the man,
> And I could wish my days to be
> Bound each to each by natural piety.'"

It was evident, that my friend had talked himself quite serious, for he was running into blank verse. And truly, in his peroration, amid the umbrageous multitude of words, there were certain lunar gleams of sense. The world's infancy is something more than a figure of speech. There is an analogy between the growth of the individual mind, and the development of the public soul in communities. If we except the helpless, unremembered state of babyhood, there is no stage of the individual life which has not its parallel in the annals of the kind. There is a boyhood of nations, when the joy and pride of man is like that of a vigorous schoolboy; in bodily strength, in the pursuit and capture of animals; in running, riding, swimming, wrestling, and all perfections of bones and sinews. Then comes the amorous, romantic youth; the age of gallantry and chivalry, fond of splendour and marvel; eager as childhood, but more imaginative, more disputatious, more im-

passioned. This is succeeded by the peculiar age of poetry; when its heroic and romantic themes are but just remembered, and its wonders but half believed, the poet comes and gives them a mausoleum in the imagination. Next succeeds the busy, calculating manhood of society; the age of common sense, prudential ethics, satire, and "vile criticism;" the age of the Aristotles, Horaces, Boileaus, and Popes; of all ages the most presumptuous, despising all that has gone before; wise in its own conceit, not, like noble youth, in the strong passion of imagined certainty, but in the cold vacuity of scepticism and scorn. After this, is the sere and yellow leaf; when men and nations begin to review their days, and finding little to approve in the short-sighted wisdom of latter times, recur, with something of a tender piety, or it may be with a fond idolatry, even to the green and childish issue of their nonage. Such, methinks, is the present state of Britain; and our national taste may best be typified by an old man reading again the fairy tales that delighted his childhood, the amorous stories that engaged his youth, the first plays he had seen, the poems he had first got by heart; striving to recal the age of hope by spells of memory, and loving best the things he has known the longest.

ON PRIDE.

"PRIDE was never made for man." True enough; yet pride is always born in man. It is native and indigenous to the heart; "not by might mastered, but by special grace." Humility is the congenital temperament of no human being, far less the epidemic of any particular clime or season. Pride seems to be involved in the very essence of conscious reflective individuality; it is the peculiar self-love of a rational creature, only subdued by that faith, which introduces the creatures into the presence of the Creator, and merges the finite understanding in the infinite Reason. But its modes of manifestation are numberless; its exciting causes not to be counted. Sometimes it grovels in the dust, like the degraded serpent,—sometimes it tramples the firmament, like Lucifer in heavenly panoply. In the dull, it is sullen; in the melancholy, it is mad. In the gay, it flutters as vanity—in the grave, it stalks as pomp. It is foppery—it is puritanical, or republican plainness. It is voluble—it is taciturn. It scoffs; it bullies; it fawns. It loathes mankind, and sometimes affects universal philanthropy. It crowns the toper's bowl, and presides over the hermit's fast.

It does—what does it not? It never truly loves, nor really prays. Yet has it invented many an amorous lay, and many a rite of seeming holiness.

In all its shapes and operations, it lies under the curse pronounced against every creature that seeketh not God's glory but its own. Essentially idolatrous yet implicitly atheistic, it exiles man from the source of true nobility, extinguishes in him the light of Heaven, and forbids him to believe in a greater than himself. Such is the judgment of true wisdom; yet the world holds other language. Many, who agree in condemning personal or self-pride, speak with high approbation of certain modifications of the passion; which either imply sympathy with numbers, as family pride, national pride, and in general what is called *l'esprit de corps*, or pre-suppose a perception and reverence of abstract perfections, an acknowledgment of absolute unconditional duties; as the pride of honour, of truth, of purity, of virtue, of human, as distinguished from mere animal, nature.

Family pride, it may be argued, is intimately connected with the noblest of the affections, with the revered remembrance of parents, and the hope of posterity. It gives to man an interest in the past and in the future, diffuses his being through all the ramifications of kindred, and carries it backward and forward along the line of many generations. It breathes in historic records, in fireside traditions, in household maxims, in epitaphs and memorials of the dead. It gives a life to faded family pictures—a profitable meaning to all the jargon of heraldry.

The ancient virtues of an illustrious race die not with their possessors; but live, and grow, and multiply in the deeds of a stainless progeny. And all the annals, monuments, armorial bearings, rusty helmets, and torn banners, which preserve the memory of ancestral glories, are so many securities to the succeeding times for continuance in honour. Can the man be a coward that sees the helmet of his grandsires in his hall? Can he be failing in hospitality, that reads his motto on the mighty flagon, the ponderous plate, from which his forefathers entertained the lusty progenitors of his tenantry? Do not even the bucks' horns and foxes' heads of past centuries admonish the inheritor of a family mansion to rise betimes, and reside upon his estate? And what lady of birth and fashion might not profit by contemplating the curious needle-work, the quaint receipts, the exact inventories of bountiful housekeeping, the well-thumbed and dog-eared manuals of devotion bequeathed by her great aunts, and great-great-great-grandmothers?

Nor is this historical and genealogical feeling of self-esteem necessarily confined to the members of aristocratic houses. The possessor of a cottage, with its savoury garden of herbs, and few contiguous acres, had once his family pride, his family anecdotes and traditions; and would have felt that a graceless son, or frail daughter, dishonoured more than themselves, or their living relatives. The simplest villager found an interest in his kinsfolk of the churchyard; and hoped himself to be thought of when he

should be gathered to them. Then there were antiquities, public heir-looms, which "gentled the condition" of a whole neighbourhood. An old Saxon church, a weather-worn cross, a sainted well, a hollow trysting tree, contributed to the self-respect of all who grew old beside them; and every elder of the hamlet had his tales of the hall, and of the good family. A mother speaks not more tenderly of the pranks of her wild boy, than would these grey-haired rustics of the follies of my lord, or the young squire.

It is to be feared that these feelings are fast decaying from among the people. Commercial prosperity has tended to set wealth and poverty in sharp and angry opposition. Property has lost its permanent character; the whole population have become migratory; and every one now believes that riches are the work of man—not, as was the antique creed, a growth of time, and a boon of Providence. Traditions and pedigrees may still compose the conversation of certain high-born elderly maidens, and superannuated domestics; but they no longer engage the attention of the rustic ingle. The feeling which sanctified them is too natural, too holy, to be ever quite extinct, but it is much debilitated by the diffusion of transferable wealth, and marketable information. As money becomes common, books multiply, and the springs of ephemeral interest break forth at every road side; we are more and more weaned from the past, and self-centred in the present. The perpetual subdivision of artificial wants and desires, the constant succession of objects, the ever varying phases

of the passing time, give to each day and hour a sort of personal importance, which estranges the thoughts of men from the inheritance of memory. We no longer yearn after antiquity as a pledge of perpetuity. We bow no more to the decrees of ancient wisdom, nor vaunt ourselves in "armoury of the invincible knights of old."

Family pride is not extinct; in some favoured minds it still maintains its feudal dignity, its chivalrous grace, its romantic poetry. But there is also a prosaic family pride abroad, in which there is nothing historical, nor imaginative, nor reverential; but which is a very silly, and supremely disagreeable species of personal vanity—chiefly conspicuous at assize balls, and in cabinet squabbles. I have observed that it particularly infests politicians; and titled or honourable females, whose husbands are commoners. These people may pretend to be proud of their descent; but, in fact, they only make their descent a pretext for being proud of themselves. Could they but see how ridiculously their airs are parodied by their inferiors, they must needs be ashamed. Theirs is an exclusive, unparticipated pride; it admits, excites, and deserves, no sympathy. They pique themselves on an invidious distinction—a monopoly, conscious that no fellow creature is exalted by their greatness.

Nationality is the family pride of nations. In those primeval associations, which were formed when the roomy earth was one vast wilderness of unowned fertility, the national bond was close as a domestic tie. Originally united by kindred, or matrimonial

alliance; revering in one patriarchal chieftain their father, priest, and king; deriving wealth and power, far more from the number of their brethren and children, than of their flocks and herds; and referring all personal dignity to the stock of their geniture—each tribe, horde, caste, and clan continued still a household; not always internally at peace—for never, since our first parents "through Eden took their solitary way," has a golden age existed—but always feeling, even in the deadly sympathy of fraternal hate, that the same blood was flowing in their veins; that they were more to each other for good or evil than they could be to the rest of the world; they could not wholly separate their individual self-esteem from the honour of their confraternity—their personal from their family pride.

When agriculture, the true *Ceres legifera*, introduced property and law; when families became states and cities, and the community of interest, government, and language, supplanted and supplied the earlier and more natural connection of race—men learned to look upon the city as their common parent; to claim relationship with the ground which they tilled. Fellow citizens were brothers by birth or adoption; and their country's glory was an inheritance, unalienable and indivisible, in which the rich and the poor partook alike. The original sacredness of the patriarchal union was re-hallowed by the strong affections of locality; and devolved upon every stream and upon every hill, whose eternity seemed to be communicated to the society, which, through

successive generations, grew and continued beside the same waters, and beneath the same everlasting barriers.

Man is a proud animal; and cannot but feel his own exaltation in the exaltation of whatever he loves; for whatever a man loves is a part of himself. How then can the love of country, which comprehends all attachment of place, habitation, property, friendship, and kindred, subsist without national pride? And as, in all beloved objects, we dwell with most partial fondness on that which is most characteristic and peculiar; so, in our country, we prize especially those things which distinguish it from other countries; as language, manners, positive institutions, historical recollections, antiquities:—even humours, fashions, and follies, modes of dress and gestures, matters indifferent and absurd, when opposed to foreign modes and predilections, become, as it were, bone of our bone; and cannot be surrendered without a diminution of self-importance, a serious offence to our nationality.

Hence we (Englishmen, I mean) are often ostentatious abroad of what we should conceal or eradicate at home; and appear to our neighbours rather as inveterate John Bulls than as rational Britons. We are proud of our country, and with good cause; but I am afraid we are also prodigiously proud of ourselves, and apt to imagine our individual peculiarities essential to the national character. Neither do we willingly tolerate the nationality of other people. It is an honour to be an Englishman. Well, and good;

but we ought not, as too many of us do, to esteem it a disgrace or calamity not to be so. As I was walking one day in Hyde Park, I heard a blooming bright-eyed lassie, about ten years old, exclaim in a sweet, treble voice, "La! mama, look, there is a Frenchman!" "Hush, my dear!" replied the matron; "poor man! he cannot help it!" Now, though the supposed Frenchman was no less undeniably an Englishman than myself, I could not help smiling at the exclusiveness of our aristocratical Anglicism, which considers a foreign extraction in the light of a natural infirmity; and concludes that all nations would be English if they could. There is a calm unsuspicion, a grave taking of the matter for granted, in our English nationality, very different from the ebullient, bragging Gallicism of the French —the disputative Caledonianism of the Scotch—the pistolling Hibernianism of the Irish—the antiquarian Cymrodorianism of the Welsh—the Teutonic Cosmopolitism of the Germans, (Teutonic Cosmopolite is as good a phrase as Roman Catholic)—or the democratic citizenism of the Americans.

Thank heaven! we all of us, English, French, Dutch, and Norwegians, still love our country; but when we affect Greek and Roman patriotism, we pitifully deceive ourselves. "The land we live in" has still a place among our affections; but it is not, as with them of old times, the beginning and end of all honourable love, all duty, all piety, all hope. To form the citizen was the sole aim of ancient discipline; and virtue itself was chiefly prized as the strength

and health of the community. According to the Roman and Spartan creed, men were made for the advantage and perpetuity of the state; we more wisely esteem the state in proportion as its institutions contribute to the welfare of man. The fervour of public spirit was, in a great measure, owing to the locality of the Gentile religions. The gods of a captive city were supposed to be vanquished, captured, exiled, and shamed. Our God is the God of the whole earth. The narrow limits of the classical republics, which rendered the terms, city and state, in a manner synonymous, and made each citizen acquainted with the utmost limits of his country, contributed much to the ardour and concentrated intensity of patriotism. Modern kingdoms are, for the most part, so large, that the patriotic feelings receive little assistance from local associations, which are apt to degenerate into provincial prejudice. Our zeal and our pride are diffused over too large a surface, or contracted within the narrow bounds of a county, a corporation, a college, a school, or a club; and a spurious public spirit, a dull, conceited kind of public pride is generated, not a little derogatory to the dignity of genuine nationality.

ON PRIDE.

(IN CONTINUATION.)

"The child is father of the man.
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety."

IT is a great comfort to a man whose life has been somewhat erratic, and whose opinions have been formed rather from casual observations than scientific inductions, who has rather desired than achieved distinct ideas, which are the mental representatives of first principles, to discover that their latter thoughts explain, develop, and connect, but not contradict or falsify their first impressions. It is not, therefore, without some inward satisfaction, something better, I would fain hope, than selfish vanity, that I find the half-sportive characteristics of English nationality, indited for lady perusal, and the gay pages of a Winter's Wreath,—while, though my head was already grey, or, at least, like that of Idomeneus μεσαιπολιος, my heart and hopes were not quite past their spring,—confirmed by the reflections of a recent day, set down without any purpose of publication, and under feelings so different, that I can hardly suppose them the offspring of mere impulse, humour, or idiosyncrasy.

Let me not be misunderstood. I blame not those whose last opinions are, or appear to be, not only opposite, but directly contrary to their first. The vile names, rat and apostate, are fulminated by all sects and parties against every man whose riper judgment does not confirm the protestations of his youth. No doubt their Hebrew or Syriac equivalents were, by the Pharisees, cast in the teeth of St. Paul. But this is as absurd as illiberal, and as illiberal as ill-mannerly. A man should not take his opinions like a wife, for better and for worse; neither should he take them as a mistress, upon liking—but upon good behaviour—*quamdiu bene se gesserint*—so long as they approve themselves to be what he originally took them for, faithful servants of truth. For the best opinions are like fire and water, good servants but bad masters, and should never be confounded with principles, to which alone the allegiance of the moral will is due. Moreover, though it is the duty of every one who pretends or tries to think for himself, to comprehend and acknowledge whole truths, yet as all practical truths are many sided, and it is not always possible to exhibit more than one side of a truth at a time, a prudent man will turn that face outwards which the season needs, and this will sometimes be the face least like the general aspect. It is to beguile the time that men look like the time. But the charge of apostacy is very justly alleged against those who, without any new light, without pause or deliberation, change parties at the beck of a minister or a multitude, on hollow pretexts of expe-

diency, or perhaps in the caprice of ill-humour, at some imaginary neglect, and at the utmost pinch desert the hopes of those who have entrusted them with the ark of their confidence. No change,—nay, nor conviction, can justify public treachery or private ingratitude. Such men there have been, but they are not worth mourning over. Far more afflicting is it to see how little even better kind of people are improved by the experience of their inward attention, and persevere in asserting that every successive shadow of a cloud on the unstable waters of their fancy is a rock of ages. And the cause is obvious. With ninety-nine out of a hundred, opinions, when most they seem sincere—when they do sound like a native utterance of the soul, and not a mere reverberation—the echo of an echo—are nothing more than the exponents of feelings, and feelings with the man are but the operation of circumstance upon complexion; they change therefore as circumstances alter, and as complexions are affected by age and bodily health. In sensitive persons, in whom the feminine element predominates, whose passive imagination is plastic as that of a lady in an interesting situation, and whose volition has become feeble for want of exercise, these changes are so rapid and visible, that they impose on nobody, not even on themselves. The more vehemently they assert, the more fancifully they illustrate, the more acutely they argue a position, the less credit they obtain for sincerity. Not that they are wilfully insincere, or influenced by mere vanity or love of contradiction. No such thing. They come

for sympathy, and though they cannot agree with you, are most anxious that you should agree with them; and if by chance you do assent to any isolated proposition, will hug you, shake you by the hand, and thank you as if you had done them some mighty service, and all because they mistake the vividness of impression, the clear outline and brilliant colouring of a dream, for substantial reality. I know—at least I ought to know—a man, who is old enough to know better, who is always much more of a malcontent and a fatalist in the morning than in the evening, in wet weather than in fair, after a bad than a good dinner, almost sceptical in the company of ugly she-saints, a perfect leveller in the presence of dignified lady aristocrats—who would be, I am afraid, Jeremy Bentham to Mrs. Trollope, and a caricature of Edmund Burke to Miss Martineau. What is worse still, he is most paradoxical when conversing with literal-minded, unimaginative, and therefore misapprehensive, individuals, with whom old-fashioned maxims have acquired the force of moral laws. But a gleam of sunshine, the entrance of a baby, a smile from a bonny lass, a favourite air on harp, piano, or fiddle, or a hearty laugh from a jovial tolerating friend, soon restore him to his habitual mood of philanthropic loyalty, far enough removed indeed from church-and-state conservatism, but yet further from utilitarian whiggery, or destructive radicalism.

But with grave, practical men, whose feelings are not like an æolian harp, at the mercy of the winds, the changes originating in humour and constitution,

more or less precipitated by circumstances of moment, acquire a fixation and permanence, and they have not imagination enough to recal their former selves, far less to conceive a condition of mind and moral relation which they have never actually experienced. There is no "natural piety," no filiation between their former and their latter selves. If they remember at all the sentiments and affections of their youth, they only remember them to laugh at them as childish things, which they have outgrown, like their petticoats, and laid aside like their rattles. They take it for granted that every youngster, if he be not a fool, will think as they do, when they have lived as long. If not strictly religious, they are mighty tolerant of youthful vices, but have no mercy upon youthful eccentricities. They would rather see their sons rakes than enthusiasts; and with their objects, they are in the right, for nothing prepares the way so well for sober, regular worldliness as the irregularities which

> "Disorder all within,
> And petrify the feeling."

But not to dwell on beings so utterly unamiable, there are good men, kind hearts, and sensible heads too, in their own way, who, from mere forgetfulness, condemn as downright madness or depravity doctrines which, when themselves held them, they esteemed the flower and quintessence of benevolence and nobleness. They have no skill to set things in the same perspective wherein they once beheld them. "The light of other days" shines not for them. Unless they chance to

have committed themselves by committing their dogmata to paper, they will absolutely forget and resolutely deny them, as a man will forswear in the morning what he swore over night during the discussion of the third bottle. No wonder that this should take place in a matter of so variable a physiognomy as politics. Most men have been at least once in love before five-and-twenty; yet how few men of the world at five-and-forty have the least inkling of what love means, or touch of toleration, not to say reverence, for that which ennobles youth. Whatever, indeed, is foolish, gross, self-seeking in the passion, they remember well enough; but all that is generous, imaginative, spiritual, all that makes true love a fitting type and precursor of a yet holier affection, a union more lasting and divine, is clean forgotten, like a pre-existent state, and they will not believe that it has ever been. They are like an anatomising materialist, seeking for the soul and determined not to find it, with a dissecting knife in a putrid carcase. Such men are not so much apostates from their principles or their party, as from themselves.

My observation is, I confess, but limited in the female world. I am no Will Honeycomb; but, as far as that observation extends, the feelings of women are far more constant, entire, and continuous than those of men—they are less liable to be divorced from themselves—their sympathies run in an unbroken line through the whole extent of their existence. They are, indeed, much more liable to conversion than their obdurate lords; they are equally, perhaps more,

apt to mistake impression for conviction; they take, too often, the latest voice that sets their ears a ringing for the *Vox Dei;* and are too, too readily induced to make a merit of fighting against their reason, their native goodness, in some cases against their authorised advisers, and the natural reserve of their sex. But it is by duty—real or imagined—that their opinions are guided. A good woman always thinks that to be true which she thinks ought to be true. Fitness is to her mind the sole constituent, at least the highest evidence, τὸ τεκμήριον, of truth! An excellent disposition; but *corruptio optimi pessima.* Still woman is constant in her affections, even if fickle, with regard to their objects. Though the reflection be shifted, the mirror remains the same, unless it be shattered by some outward shock, or dimmed by a slow rusting process within. The heart of an old woman is essentially the heart of a girl. This is evinced by the busy suspicious interest which agitates the venerable frame of female eld, when matters of the heart are even slightly alluded to. They never scoff or horse-laugh like old men; and though they may rebuke, sharply too, it is not with the imperative contempt of the sexagenarian worldling. They have not forgotten that love is a serious thing. Seeing, however, how incalculable are the ebbs and flows of sentiment, while some constancy of opinion is indispensable to secure stability and consistency of action, —indispensable even to the individual—more palpably indispensable to the community—we must admit the public necessity of certain prejudices, and of certain

catholic tenets to be maintained by societies, as a bond of union, and a pledge of mutual security. I am not now prepared to speak of the Catholic Faith, or the Catholic Church. They should be spoken of incidentally; but of those minor communities which it has been liberal of late to disavow—Nationality and Party.

Party spirit, when really founded on public principles, when the attachments to measures generate the attachment to men, is not only a necessary element in a balanced government, but a strong antagonist and antidote to self-centered selfishness. But then the party must be representative, and representative of some truth—though no one party can represent all truths. There is a party spirit, which I mortally detest—to wit, the *esprit de corps*, when a man, without choice or examination, takes up the traditional maxims of a village, a college, a club, a corporation, a coterie, or resolves to uphold them, not from any perception of their truth, or experience of their goodness, but because they are the Shibboleth of some petty exclusive body. Even in its least offensive form, that of family politics, this corporate dogmatism is hugely disagreeable, and when it has not the dulcifying infusion of kindred love and filial duty, it is inexpressibly odious and disgusting. This booby is a tory because he is Kent, and another nincompoop must be a radical because he is Brummagem. Dr. Stop-the-way, the senior fellow, took part with the Sultan against the Greeks, with the Czar against the Poles—only because "Church-and-King" were always drunk—in our common room.

This evil spirit assumes a fearful shape in the unions and associations of the poor and ignorant and brutalised populace, who, having no change of ideas within, and little variety of objects without, are in a manner possessed, saturated with any single notion, or passion, or purpose that obtains entrance into their mind. Rebellion, riot, murder, and arson, blind credulity to the falsehoods of demagogues, and resolute unbelief in the words of truth and soberness, are the fruits of plebeian *esprit de corps*. *Esprit de corps*, assuming the form of nationality, and the sanction of zeal, keeps hapless Ireland in the wretched state to which centuries of misrule, tyranny, persecution, extortion, and ascendancy have reduced her. But though the spirit may display less of the horns and tail in more cultivated communities, it is no less essentially a devil, and lets the cloven foot peep out pretty plain to be seen—in some institutions intended for better things—especially when they are founded upon, or infected with, exclusive or sectarian principles, be they old or new. What else makes the students of some foreign universities leaders in every sedition and every riot, in the streets, and in the theatres? The momentum of an evil may vary considerably in different conditions and circumstances; but what is really good in any can be evil in none. No doubt the gentlemanly sceptic is much more endurable than the coarse and vulgar infidel, but the latter is a glass in which the former may behold his own likeness. Christian faith and Christian piety are as truly excellent in the lowest as in the highest;

they have an inherent grace—a true nobility. A Christian may be rustic or *bourgeois*, but never vulgar. Yet is not Christianity inconsistent with chivalric and courtly accomplishment; but, needing nothing, is yet able to subdue and assimilate all things to itself. Bigotry is essentially vulgar, but worst of all is the bigotry of the scoffer.

Whatever tends to deprive man of the liberty of thought, making the pure reason, which owes no fealty to man, but filial obedience to God and his word, the bond-slave and the mouth-piece of human inventions, is at enmity with the Supreme Good. Whatever creates a vehemence of feeling, and determination of will, for or against any particular scheme or dogma, regardless of truth or falsehood, moral utility or hurtfulness, is of the Sire of Lies, who was "a murderer from the beginning."

But far other is that zeal and affection for apprehended truth, and good experienced or designed, which, beginning in faith, is confirmed and animated by sympathy, and works its righteous purposes by mutual efforts, in the might of a common soul. Such brotherhood cannot exist without mutual compromise, and a temper to postpone all regards that stand aloof from the main point. "He that is not against us, is with us." When great public ends are to be accomplished; a conscientious care in the use of means does not infer idle scrupulosity about the character or motives of co-operators. St. Paul rejoiced that Christ was preached, though some preached "to add affliction to his bonds." Whoever advocates the

cause of freedom and humanity will be annoyed by the support of certain disturbers who love change for its own sake—of bankrupts in estate and reputation —of destructives of every class and order; but weak must be his faith, and cold his love, who abandons the field because he cannot quite approve of *all* the followers of the camp.

But the spirit of nationality is yet higher in its right use, and perhaps more fearful in its power and issues than the spirit of partizanship; and this brings me to the point I have all along been aiming at, namely, the confirmation of my characteristics of English nationality.

It is usual with certain persons, who are as discontented with the time as others with the place or station to which it has pleased Providence to appoint them, to complain of a recent decay of national affection in England. For this I see no ground. The Englishman was always intensely an individual—a man *per se*. His honour, the foundations of his self-esteem, like his house and fireside, are his own. He is too, I grieve to own it, sadly prone to suffer his dislike of political systems, if not of administration, to overrule his allegiance to his fatherland. A disaffected Englishman is too apt to become anti-patriotic. This is not the case with Frenchmen. Every Frenchman is a Frenchman, be he Socialist, Dynastic, Legitimate, Buonapartist, Republican, St. Simonian. Even the emigrants took pride in the victories of the Republic and of the Empire, which made France to them a land forbidden. The lowest Parisian piques

himself upon Racine and Voltaire. So does the Scot in Burns and Sir Walter. Now, the laborious Englishman seldom knows the name of Milton, or more than the name of Shakspeare, and certainly does not think himself the better for either of them. England has produced greater men, if not more great men, than any other country—Greece itself not excepted; but our very greatest men have not identified themselves with the national mind or character.

England is typified, not by Spenser, Shakspeare, Milton, Wordsworth; nor yet by Bacon or Taylor, but by Defoe, Hogarth, Fielding, and Dickens.

John Bull, truth be told, is a prosaic personage. The present age is not a bit more utilitarian than any that has passed since the Revolution. The chivalry of England expired with the first Charles and the first race of Cavaliers. Subtile thinkers and high imaginations arise from time to time, and fertilise their several neighbourhoods; but their influence on the public is chiefly perceptible in the angry ridicule they excite. They are considered as aliens, and not welcomed—as aliens of every other shade of colour and of politics—with the hospitality of British gentlemen.

It is a sad mistake to confound national prejudice with nationality, or nationality itself with patriotism; an error as wide as to suppose the greatest flatterers of kings the most loyal subjects, or the noisiest sycophants of the mob the truest friends of the people. If patriotism be a virtue, it must be a duty grounded in a permanent truth. It cannot consist in assuming and asserting our country to be all that the patriot

should strive to make it. If patriotism be a Christian virtue, it is not a feeling of hatred, rivalry, ambition, and can never tend to invasion of others' rights, or impudent denial of their merits.

The body of England is nationalised enough. The many are as fond of their old ways as a she-bear of her cubs, only they are destitute of Calisto's instinct, and do not attempt to lick the lumps into shape. Even the better educated of the people, the country gentlemen, merchants, and clergy of the old school, are too apt to hold that there is neither religion, morals, common sense, nor good beef out of England; that the French are a nation of dancing-masters; the Italians all monks, semiviri, and figurantes, and that the Pope has horns and a tail. Still more unreasonably they claim for England, or rather for their own dear selves, some very good things of foreign extraction; as, for instance, Handel's music. It is pitiable to see our really cosmopolite philosophers affecting this boorish and *bourgeois* John Bullism, which I am, nevertheless, far from disliking when it is natural and in its place. Nelson was quite right in impressing his middies with the duty of hating a Frenchman like the devil; but such an injunction would sound very strange from a pulpit, or a chair of moral philosophy.

But true nationality, the basis of national virtue, can only be maintained by strong external pressure, as during a war, or by the aid of the historic feeling. For a nation at any one time is nothing, except as opposed to other nations—nothing but an abstraction

or a noun of multitude; neither of which is calculated to excite a very warm affection. Hence the intense nationality of the Scotch, Welsh, Irish, Basque, Catalans, and other races existing under alien governments, which is concentrated by jealousy of their rulers. It is like the zeal of sectaries against an established church. Take away from them the attraction of repulsion, and they will lose the attraction of cohesion. It is the pride of such septs to preserve themselves separate from the larger community in which they are included, like the waters of Arethusa flowing fresh through the salt tide,—not without hope of breaking out once more in some green island of the times to come. Thus the true nationality of Rome was kept alive for six centuries by incessant wars at her own gates. Italy once subdued, Roman nationality was a thing of history, sustained by poets and rhetorical historians, by commemorative shows, and a strongly localised religion, and doubtless impaired by the exotic and adoptive art by which the native mind was overlaid. Greece, herself, when the pressure of Persia was removed, was "living Greece no more," or lived only in the recollections of Marathon and the tale of Troy. No great country in a state of peace and security has any other nationality *in esse* than what abides in history—no vital, energetic nationality, unless its history abide in the hearts of the people. For the population, high or low, at any given period, is not the nation, any more than the water flowing at any moment is the sacred Nile or Ganges. The unity and personality of a nation is in its history.

A people without history could have no more individuality than a man without memory, between the instants of whose existence there was neither paternity nor filiation, each atom of whose body was an independent monad. In Platonic phrase, history makes of successive generations a conscious monad. Now, in England there is little surviving history out of books. We have few historic monuments, little tradition, and our ballad literature is merely antiquarian. We have hardly a commemorative rite or custom except the equestrian gymnastics of the Lady Godiva at Coventry, and the annual procession of Guy Faux. It follows that the masses know nothing of their country, but what they hear at the ale-house; to wit, that she is the most tax-paying spot upon the planet. The little history that might be gleaned from signs is fading fast away. Who cares whether he drink under the King of Prussia or the Saracen's Head? Queen Caroline is well nigh forgotten. The popularity of the sailor-monarch was yet briefer. Portobello was once a capital *shoeing*-horn, and Port Mahon had its day; but now they are only places in a map. It is almost a wonder that they have not been corrupted into some monstrous nondescript, like the Bull and Mouth (Boulogne Mouth), the Bag-of-Nails (Bacchanals), or Elia's cherished memory—the Cat and Salutation. Old Benbow might as well be Deucalion, and the Marquis of Granby's bald head commands as little respect as Elisha's. At the Duke of Cumberland, indeed, or the Duke of Wellington, an extra pint may sometimes be taken—to their perdition.

But to rise a little higher in the social scale. Till very lately English history made no part of school education; and the meagre abridgments and flimsy essays published for the people are not calculated to nourish an affectionate veneration for fatherland. But were it otherwise, history in books is not like history enshrined in national observance, or floating on the popular music. The mere nationality of art and literature cannot affect very many; yet, more of our past story is realised by Shakspeare's plays, than by Rapin, Hume, or even Goldsmith. Charles Dibdin, a man of real genius, wrote too exclusively for one profession; yet his songs have done much to foster an English feeling in classes that might be insensible to more refined and romantic strains.

Much good may be expected from the attention that is beginning to be paid to our ecclesiastical history, which was long and unaccountably neglected even by those whose functions, ay, and whose interests should have directed them to the study. Christianity is not, however, national in the abstract, however adapted to sanctify a patriotic loyalty. The Scotch long did, and perhaps do still, appropriate to themselves the nationality of Israel, applying the promises of the Law and the Gospel to their land, as well as to their church; but this was never the case with the English. It was as Saints, as the Elect, the chosen people, not as Britons, that the Roundheads identified themselves with Joshua and with Gideon. The Church of England has never yet been considered as coextensive with the nation; the sects,

with the exception of the Wesleyan Methodists, are in a manner anti-national. The constitution is something, but it is too much discussed and analysed to become an instinct. It is not simply English, but Whig, or Tory, or Radical.

Thus it comes to pass that the nationality of Englishmen remains in its first elements, a blind yet haughty feeling which has never blossomed in the popular imagination, or borne fruit in the popular common sense. But it is strong, though blind; and whenever it has occasion to act as patriotism or public spirit, it is mighty for good. When there is neither fighting nor subscribing in the way, it only growls and talks nonsense; or, which is worse, affects to be ashamed of itself.

REMARKS ON OLD AGE, PASSIVE IMAGINATION, AND INSANITY.

" Verum ii sunt opinor ætate provectiores, quam ut a me vel quicquam pravi dedoceantur, vel recti quicquam addiscant."

Porson, in his annotations on the Medea, has been provoked to this cutting sentence by the obtuseness of certain editors, professors, and schoolmasters, whom he could never bring to acknowledge the importance of an accurate inquiry into the use of Greek accents. It somewhat resembles the sentiments—I had almost said the proverbs, of Ovid, in his Metamorphoses, where we often find the weightiest observations deduced from the merest conceits, or from fictions more tasteless and ridiculous than our nursery fairy tales. Hence the Γνῶμαι or sentences of Ovid are generally the better for being separated from the context, and viewed apart from the occasions that suggest them. Porson's sarcasm is far too heavy to hang upon any accent, however *grave*. It is of wide and general acceptation. Nothing is rasher, nothing more futile and profitless, than the attempt to teach those, be their age what it may, over whom you have no natural or constituted authority, who do not

themselves acknowledge their need of instruction. If the matter, indeed, be one that admits of a point blank appeal to the conscience—if it concern the eternal interests of the soul, Duty may demand the experiment, and Grace may cause it to succeed, in spite of all moral incapacities and repugnance. Yet even in these cases, the blessed Saviour himself has cautioned us not to throw pearls before swine. But in questions of lighter moment, which appeal simply to the understanding, taste, or calculative prudence—questions of philosophy, policy, literature, art, manners—it is neither wise, nor humane, nor safe to disturb the prepossessions and convictions of elderly people that have made up their minds. Not wise, because it incurs a certain risk for a very uncertain benefit; not humane, because it inflicts pain and violates peace for no compensating good; not safe, because it either irritates sluggish prejudice to angry bigotry, or unsettles the whole frame and constitution of opinion, inducing a doubtfulness that too often seeks repose in unbelief. It is, besides, a sure way to lose friends and make enemies. An obtrusive adviser gives more offence than a biting jester, for the jester's vanity sets him below his company, and exposes him to easy contempt; while the corrector and counsellor must needs appear as a self-constituted judge, a self-asserted superior. A proud man resents advice as an insult, an indolent man dislikes it as a bore. Those for the most part digest it most easily who are resolved to do their own way.

It is no wonder, if elderly persons do not like to be

set right by their juniors. They are apt to think that their experience makes them infallible upon points wherein they are utterly inexperienced, or which do not fall within the compass of individual experience, as metaphysics and doctrinal religion. They have often a comfortable assurance that whatever they do not know cannot be worth knowing; that new discoveries are all either false or mischievous, and that what they have contrived to do without can be of no use to anybody. Far be it from me to assert that this is the universal or even the general character of old age; it is only its besetting infirmity. Men have I known—grey-haired, venerable men—eager to learn, as glad to teach, to the last syllable of their lengthened days; ready to listen to the doubts or the suggestions of the youngest or the most ignorant; and enduring, not merely with patience but with benignity, contradiction and perverseness which few could put up with, even from those to whom it was their interest to defer. But then these old men were lovers of truth for its own sake,—a rare affection, for which curiosity and latitudinarianism are often mistaken. The men who are too old to learn are generally men of little early culture, *practical* men, who have done well in the world, or such as for years have been the oracles of a club, a combination, or coffee-room, or a country town with a genteel neighbourhood. Indeed, where the habit of investigation has never been formed, or long discontinued, the incapacity of new impressions ought not to be ascribed to moral indocility. The mind stiffens like the muscles,

refuses to be tortured into an unwonted attitude, and will rather break than bend.

Old woman is a sort of slang phrase, implying a mixture of credulity and inconvincibility; but I thoroughly agree with Elia that it is a vulgar and irreverend phrase, utterly inconsistent with true gallantry and the tenderness due alike to age and to womanhood. It is very foolish to argue aged ladies out of their harmless superstitions. Woman is little interested in general positions at any age; and few *good* women like to hear subjects which they have ever been taught to consider solely under the categories of right and wrong, propriety and impropriety, submitted to the test of cold abstract reason or comparative probability. To them the Good and the Fit are always the True. What they have once believed becomes an article of faith and duty, a portion of their being. Paradoxes give them positive pain. An interruption of their associations is like a forcible stoppage of their breath. The very statement that aught they have been accustomed to hold sacred is or can be matter of doubt with any, shocks them, not only as erroneous or dangerous, but as some unheard of and unnatural enormity of which, as excellent Sir Thomas Brown hath it, there should not "remain any register but that of hell." It is hardly in the power of a simple-hearted innocent woman, educated as women so generally were educated half a century ago, to look upon any proposition naturally as tenable or untenable. What is not stuff of the conscience, or matter of order, decorum, and comfort,

makes no impression on their sensorium, begets no feeling of reality. You might as well talk Chinese as argue with them about it. It is nothing, neither of this world nor of the next.

The only serious errors, even of judgment, resulting from this constitution of autumnal womanhood (and these are sometimes annoying enough) arise from the incapacity to divide the essential from the accidental and circumstantial. The wife and the wedding-ring, the parson and the surplice, the sovereign and the crown, the devil and his cloven foot, are indivisible in the apprehensions of female eld. The knowledge of a fact only puzzles the old lady, if it tend to decompose any of her complex ideas. Thus, though she must know from the title-page that our English Bible is a translation, she nevertheless considers the English words as of the same divine authority as the sense. It is wonderful what small motes will break the electric chain of her associations. I have known her very angry with a catechumen who has presumed to modernise his catechism by substituting *has* for *hath*, exchange "which art in heaven" for "who art in heaven," and instead of "give us *this* day our daily bread," say, "give us *day by day* our daily bread," which is perhaps closer to the original, and better suited for evening exercise; and she will esteem the prayer more presumptuous than acceptable.

The truth is, old ladies, as a class, are poorly provided with *fancy*, and for the most part destitute of the active or masculine imagination; while their

passive or receptive imagination, which may conveniently be termed female, retains its primary impressions with a photographic power; so that in some cases they almost exist in a state of somnambulism amid the days that are gone.

But they are incapable of presenting to themselves any image, any state of being or suffering by the act of volition. Now a merely passive imagination is like a Chinese painting, it has no perspective, no distinction of time or space, substance or shadow; the reflection in the water is solid as the thing that casts it, the rainbow as tangible as a jewelled diadem. The reason may, indeed, negative the presentations of the inert senses, as in slight cases of hypochondria or delirium tremens, but the will cannot remove the presentation. The passive imagination, without the aid of the active or voluntary imagination, can no more help itself than can a mirror. It cannot shift the scene, and were it not in the healthy body continually relieved and diverted by the influx of fresh objects from without, would quickly pass into madness, as it does in so many instances, where unmastered passion, grief, or rage, or terror, or pride, or hopeless love, or jealousy, worst of all, informs and detains the floating spectres; or when, as in nunneries, among ascetic fanatics, or in dungeons, all change of external objects is excluded; or when the corporeal senses are so weakened by disease as to refuse their office; or when the voluntary power is impaired by excessive excitement, as with habitual drunkards; or when, as under the

effects of opium, the communication with the outer world is sealed up, and the imagination is left, like an unfed stomach, to work upon itself. It is haply a merciful provision that the morbid continuity and sameness of the mind's operation which denotes the commencement of insanity, overstrains and snaps itself, and leaves nothing but disjointed fragments of the tyrannic idea, as we sometimes see a huge black thundercloud shivered into a myriad flaky portions, all impregnated and reddened with the electric fire, yet each assuming some fantastic shape of its own. The intense heat collected in the focus cracks the burning glass and allows the fragments to cool. Sad as this advanced state of madness, when the intellect exists only in monads and atoms, may be to look upon, I doubt not that it is a happy state compared to the misery of the mind whose body, mind, and soul are possessed in the unity of one dark memory or hideous image—one hell-burning passion. Sometimes, when madness has done its work, a change, a blessed change, comes over the spirit of the dream; the presentations are no longer frightful, but gay and smiling. The ruins of the mind are overgrown with herbage, wild indeed, and useless, but not without beauty or fragrance. Often the whole unhappy life seems to be obliterated, and the poor lunatic awakes a perfect, gamesome, laughing, tearful, prattling, flower-loving child. Insanity subsides into premature dotage. And it may be, when guilt was not the cause of distraction, when the sufferer has been more sinned

against than sinning, his soul, though it cannot have an intelligible communion with earth, is cheered and refreshed with no delusive glimpses of a better world. At all events, it must be some benefit to the insane to lose the consciousness of insanity; for what has madness so horrible as the knowledge of itself? Better no reason at all than the reason which discerns and condemns the tumult which it cannot stay.

The passage from partial to total lunacy is probably much more rapid in some cases than in others, according to the strength of body and of intellect, the age and strength of the patient, and the protraction or suddenness of the proximate causes. Unforeseen calamity, terror without warning, strike like the thunderbolt; while slow, wasting sorrow, disappointed affection, a "too keen sense of constant infelicity," undermine the intellect by unforeseen degrees, and seldom unsettle the pure reason, however they loosen the sinews of the understanding. A strong masculine imagination judiciously exercised, is so far from a symptom of derangement, that it is highly conservative of sanity. Industrious habits, cheerful temperance, an energetic will, a single corner of the heart for love and hope to hide in, will save the brain from turning, long, very long, perhaps till death bring deliverance. A sure and loving faith in God, founded on a right idea of the Divine nature and attributes, and nourished with prayer and good works, will prevent insanity from ever obtaining mastery over the reason, though it may

not always prevent its existing in the feelings and in the imagination. Not that I believe that worldly misfortune would ever impair even the intellectual faculties of a sincere and enlightened Christian, born with *mens sana in corpore sano*, living among his fellow-men, and performing all his duties in the world. The partial derangement of Cowper was a bodily disease that displayed itself before he became emphatically a religious man. In the later part of his life it rarely affected his reason, though it sorely afflicted his heart.

THE BOOKS OF MY CHILDHOOD.

I AM a man of small reading and small experience, yet much of my little has lain in bye-paths, where few, perhaps, have strayed at all; still fewer wandered with observant eyes. I have been a loiterer out of the daily ways of men so long, that I scarcely know whether I be in or out of the beaten track. It is easy for the ignorant to find curiosities—for to ignorance, just awakened by the desire of knowledge, everything is new and strange. Often, in the course of my devious peregrinations, have I cried εὕρηκα, when stumbling on some theory old as Pythagoras; often should have blushed to find my brightest discoveries, either copy-head common-places, or paradoxes of puzzle-books. I have hailed, as new-found lands, the fog-banks that have misled bewildered barques in centuries past; and brought home, as special rarities, wares with which the market has long been glutted.

"He that taught himself had a fool for his master." True—if he neglected the instructions of his elders, or *voluntarily* chose himself, when he might have had a better master. As I am not about to write confessions of a desultory reader, I have no occasion to acknowledge myself that fool; but I believe I should

have learned more with fewer teachers—and certainly have read more with fewer books. From infancy to manhood, I was surrounded with books—good old books—which I despair of seeing again. I lived much with great men, and should have lived more with some that have departed.

A well-filled library, though a precious, is yet a melancholy sight. How few of those folios shall I ever read! How few can any one man read aright! How many are little likely, in this generation at least, to be read aright at all; and yet how much might be derived from their pages, had we a just value for the salvages of time!

It is matter mortifying to a person, who would fain be thought on good terms with good company, to read in a division, names of peers which he is ashamed to read aloud for fear of mispronouncing. I have a somewhat similar feeling, when I discover how very slight and imperfect is my acquaintance with the heroes of classic lore. Casting my eye over a brief notice of Silius Italicus, extracted from the "Bibliotheca Latina" of John Alfred Fabricius, enlarged by John Augustus Ernestus, I find in a single page the formidable designations of Jac. Duport, Modius in Novantiquis Lectionibus, Glandorpius in Onomastico, Nic. Antonius Bibliothec. His. Vet., Christophorus Cellarius, Arnold. Drakenborchius, Nic. Hiero. Glundlingius in Gundlingianis—parte 12. Claudius Dausqueius, Thomas de Pinedo, and Joh. Anto. Vulpius, not one of whom I ever, to my recollection, heard of before,—could I comfort myself with the reflection

that these are fellows whom nobody knows? I am not much more familiar with Daniel Heinsius, one of the giants of erudition,—according to the Doctor, one of the last of the giants. Now what do I know of Philostratus Spartianus, Stephanus Byzantinus? A few quotations—and what I can glean from the last augmented edition of Lempriere—but I will speak no more of what I am now. Elia, in his exquisite lucubrations, asks pertinently, "Do I advance a paradox when I say, that skipping over the intervention of forty years, a man may have leave to love *himself*, without the imputation of self-love!" I ask, may he not have leave to talk of himself, without the imputation of egotism? I do not, however, intend to talk much of myself, further than is necessary to explain the operation of the Books of my Childhood.

Though, as I have said, a dweller among books as long as I can remember, I was not, as a child, very fond of reading. I believe Sr T. C., ὁ μακαρίτης, and the excellent Southey, whom I was privileged to call uncle, had read more books before their twelfth year, than I have read *through* in all my existence; but I liked to be read to: I was not without a passion for knowledge, and would have tumbled over many books for a single fact or opinion; but I never felt in history or fiction that sort of curiosity which will not suffer you to lay a book down. I never, exactly, devoured a novel. If I was deeply interested in the course of a story, the interest was so violent as to be painful; I feared—I shrunk from the conclusion, or else I forestalled it. My pleasure arose, not from curiosity,

or anxiety about events and results, but from the workings of the visual imagination—from a picture daguerreotyped upon my mind; a scene in which I was at once spectator and actor, for I always identified myself with some personage or other: but I seldom enjoyed a book while I was reading, or a tale while it was telling; my pleasure was not in grazing, but in rumination. Like William Howitt, at Ackworth School, I was a great story-teller, but my stories were never original. Whatever I heard or read, I worked up into a tale of my own, in which there was no invention of incident, but sometimes great circumstantiality of description, and something like an attempt at character. I had always an intense feeling of beauty. I doted on birds, and kittens, and flowers. I was not able to take in and integrate an extensive landscape, but a mossy nook, a fancy waterfall, an opening in a wood, an old quarry, or one of those self-sufficing angles which are a dale in miniature, filled me with inexpressible delight, and I was pleased to hear, or read, or dream of such places. But of all beauty, the beauty of woman always affected me the most, thrilled me with a painful pleasure, made me experience a sinking, an unutterable want, long before it could be an object of passion. I cannot understand how any man can be indifferent to female beauty; such a pretence, if real, appears to me, so far from an evidence of high intellect and refined morality, the extreme of grossness and stupidity Hence I was never puzzled, as I have heard some men say they were in childhood, with love-

tales; but I was quite at a loss to understand how love could ever be criminal. The abuse of this passion in Telemachus, where, by the way, the good Fenelon seems to have taken his ideas of love much more from the court of Louis Quatorze, than from the Ogygian isle of Calypso, perplexed me beyond measure; and the very ungentlemanlike treatment of Venus, in that very coarse though entertaining book, "Tooke's Pantheon," (which I did not know to have been originally written by a French Jesuit,) made me quite angry.

The book in which I was taught to read by my mother (a most impracticable pupil I was, stopping to ask questions at every word,) was the spelling-book of Daniel Fenning, which Dr. Mavor, when he condescended to write a spelling-book, called a vulgar though popular composition. As it was a lesson-book, I cannot be supposed to be very chary of its reputation; yet, accidentally meeting with a cheap reprint,—I believe, the 78th edition,—my heart warmed towards it, and, on examining its contents, could not perceive any just ground for the voluminous Doctor's denunciation; though it was certainly intended and calculated more for commercial academies than nursery governesses. Besides the weary orthographic files, which I could not look at without shuddering, and the hardly less tiresome lessons in words of one syllable, it consists of well-chosen selections from the Psalms, Proverbs, and other Scriptures, necessary tables, and short fables, and tales with woodcuts—not by Bewick.

CHURCH SECTARIANISM.

"Point ne suis Lutheriste
Ne Zuinglien, et moins Anabaptiste,
Je suis de Dieu par son Fitz Jesus Christ,
Je suis celuy qui ay fait maint escrit,
Dont un seul vers on n'en sauroit extruire,
Qui a la loi divine soit contraire,
Je suis celuy, qui prens plaisir et peine,
A louer Christ et la mere tant pleine
De grace infuse ; et pour bien l'eprouver,
On le pourra par mes escrits trouver."

Clement Marot.

(IMITATED.)

My Faith, my Love, my humble Hope disclaims
The worldly bondage of new-fangled names.
What God through Christ declares I hold it true,
What God in Christ commands, I fain would do ;
And though I've penn'd full many an idle verse,
Thank Heaven, my fancies make no mortal worse ;
To all that love my Saviour and his mother,
Whate'er their garb, I hold myself a brother.

"IN my Father's house are many mansions." It were an inquiry more curious than reverent or profitable, to speculate whether all the churches, sects, denominations and societies, that subdivide and wrangle for the Christian title, some of which may not unaptly be compared to the seven women in Isaiah, that "*shall take hold of one man, saying, We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel ; only let us be called by thy name, to take away our*

reproach,"—are to have separate accommodations, and find their bliss in thinking Heaven all their own, or whether, as wiser hearts believe, all shapes and hues of Faith will vanish in the universal light, and nothing remain but the love, which is perfect light, and life, and immortality, which flows from God, and is God, even God with us, uniting all blessed souls, from the beginning to the end of time, in a beautiful communion, identifying the love of God with the love of all that are God's, that God may be all in all. Sometimes I have fancied, that the meeting of beatified spirits on high will be as the assembling of a happy family on a bright morning round the cheerful breakfast-table, who have all been dreaming of each other, it may be in feverish and distempered sleep, under strange, unintelligible forms of fear and hate, which serve but to make the dear familiar faces yet dearer when beheld in their waking reality by gladsome daylight. But for this fancy—may I not call it hope?—I should be sadly perplexed with the unaccountable aspects under which human beings, seemingly made to love each other with a more peculiar and intelligent affection, are mutually presented in this dreaming world, and especially in that portion of it, called, *par excellence*, the religious world.

I judge not those that are without. I meddle not with Inians, or Ists, or Isms of any prefix. There is quite enough of schism and reciprocal misunderstanding in the pure, apostolical, national, episcopal Church of England, which, in whatever respect it may typify the New Jerusalem, or have

been typified by the Old, is not built as a city that is at unity with itself; and, if it be a house having many mansions, it is a pity that the quarrelsome children are not sorted off into separate nurseries, that

> "Whatever brawls disturb the street,
> There may be peace at home;"

and that the plain, pious, straightforward, believing church-goers, who hope to meet their forefathers in heaven, and are content to make the best of their way thither, by the same road as their forefathers went before them, may not be disturbed by the pugnacious colloquies of high-Churchmen and liberals, nor scandalised by the impertinence, the yawning, and shuffling, and tittering of the indifferents:—

> "Birds in their little nests agree,"

an example, I am afraid, more poetical than ornithological,—

> "And 'tis a shocking sight,
> When children of one family
> Fall out, and chide, and fight:"

how much more shocking, when the children are grown men and women, and the family is the Church!

It is a stupid and mischievous mistake, which many of us, who ought to know better, are perpetually making, that all the human creatures, who fear God and honour the King, all who are anywise interested in the welfare of their country or their souls, must be of some faction or some sect; for sorry I am to say, that the term "faction" applies to almost

every political colour; and that sect may be predicated no less of the divisions within the Church, than of the separatists from it. Of the busy, bustling self-seekers, who assume to be the public, and the religious public, every clique maintains its own fraction of truth to be the whole, and seasons it with falsehood *ad libitum*. The leaders are dogmatical in proportion to their insincerity, and the followers are bigoted and clamorous in proportion as they have taken their opinions on trust, and in the gross; for a man who loves the truth, and thinks for himself, is a very bad partisan. In early youth he may be enthusiastic, but he is never positive. Thank Heaven, however, these agitators and their tails are neither the nation nor the Church. There are still thousands of true Englishmen, loyal lovers of liberty, who are neither whigs nor tories, conservatives nor destructives, ultras, liberals, nor moderates, but good citizens and good subjects, content to render just obedience to any government, to do their duty and hope for the best. Such, at least, is the disposition of their hearts; for at the present juncture it is hardly possible to avoid practically taking a side, in word and act. The time is gone by when an honest man could say conscientiously, I am no politician. I fear, lest the Church should fall into the same predicament; that there will no longer be such a thing as a pure churchman, who is neither high-Church, low-Church, nor evangelical; but holds in implicit sincerity, and peace of mind, the Faith delivered down from the Fathers.

In mere politics, the spirit of party should not be rashly condemned. It is, in fact, a necessary set-off against inevitable selfishness. A man of no party is, nine times out of ten, a man of no party but his own; or, in other words, a man who cares for no one but himself. Few, very few, can comprehend the whole truth; and it much concerns the general interest that every portion of that truth should have interested and passionate advocates.

Cætera Desunt.

SHAKSPEARE AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES.

From a Review of Hunt's (Sir Aubrey de Vere) "Julian the Apostate."

Of alarms, there are some which justify themselves, by producing the very state of things which they anticipate. Others, which induce a general propension to the opposite extreme. Of the latter kind, is the complaint so widely sounded, of the decay of British dramatic talent. Young authors, giving credit to the daily, weekly, monthly, and quarterly assertions of periodical critics, have entered boldly upon tragedy as an open field; and writers of established popularity have listened to the flattering exhortations of their admirers, who fail not to commend to their compassion the prostrate drama of their country. Thus, like those mendicant monks who acquired boundless riches by the reputation of their poverty, English literature has been enlarged with copious dramatic acquisitions, through the common belief that the vein from which it derived them was altogether exhausted.

Nevertheless, we can scarcely congratulate our contemporaries on the production of a genuine dramatic work, fitted alike to the stage and the closet. Modern writers seem aware, that in England the

reading public is not identified with the seeing and hearing public, and have generally adapted their labours exclusively to the one or the other. We are even afraid that the few attempts that have been made to accommodate both at once put us rather unpleasantly in mind of the coarse but venerable adage respecting two stools. Authors, of late, have fallen under a desperate apprehension of being too good for the public. If they would but take as much pains to arrive at excellence, as they are at to avoid it, they might do something. The unfortunate public is burdened with all the literary sins of successive generations. The quibbles and clownery of the Elizabethan writers, the rant and bombast of Dryden and Lee, the obscenity of Wycherly and Congreve, the personalities of some current publications, yea, the very blackguardism of Tom and Jerry, are all, forsooth, so many compliments to the taste of the public. The pretence is not confined to the stage;—politicians, philosophers, paragraph-writers, and fiddlers, all are ready to impute their mob-sycophancy, their superficiality, their malice, their ear-tickling farrago of odds and ends, to the bad taste of the public. Never was popish father-confessor at Lent more oppressed with the misdeeds of others, surely not so unprofitably oppressed, as that anomalous personification of everybody and nobody—that everything composed of heterogeneous nothings, the public. To borrow a phrase from one of its greatest favourites, "whose name is hidden, but his fame divulged," it seems indeed to hold the same

place in the world as that equally unsubstantial personage, Nobody, occupies in a large family. But even supposing that this wonder-working abstraction possessed a tangible substance, a "local habitation" as well as a name, we fear that the excuse of public taste will avail our authors but little. If any individual among them have a right to complain, it must be of the injudicious catering of the few, his rivals, rather than of the vitiated appetite of the many, whom he desires for readers. The nurse or parent, who for years had pampered a child with deleterious dainties, could hardly complain with a good grace if that child should at length prefer them to more wholesome food; and a sensible physician would not be liberal of reproaches to the unfortunate fondling, who had been corrupted, either against its will, or before it had a will at all. But the truth is, that mankind in general, on all points that concern the heart of the man—not the passions or interests of the individual, prefer the better to the worse, and generally select, if not the absolute best, the best within their reach. If at any time they discover a partiality for what is evil, it is because they connect it by association with what is good. We doubt not that our ancestors, who received with approbation the licentious dramas of Charles and William's days, were possessed by nature of hearts and imaginations as pure as the most fastidious of modern times; but the conduct and writings of the wits their contemporaries caused them to infer a constant association of genius with licence and obscenity. To separate

co-instantaneous impressions requires more education than many obtain, and more reflection than all are capable of. But the case of some authors coming before the world is not dissimilar to that of a man of recluse and cœlibate habits on entering female society. So far from astounding the ladies with hard words and learning, the student is apt, by a style of conversation elaborately trifling, and by manners ungainly coxcombical, to display a glaring contempt for their understanding. But it is better (of the two) to be pedantically natural, than pedantically affected. Good Greek, even in ladies' company, is more creditable than bad French. It is a dangerous experiment for any one not possessed of more suppleness than is consistent with strength, *to stoop to conquer*. Men and writers, if they please at all, must please by doing their best in their own way. Our modern stage-dramatists (not without exception) almost professedly lower their efforts to the supposed level of the general capacity: their *ars poetica* is literally an *art of sinking*. Such being the case, can it be wondered that those who dive deepest into the mud should carry the prize? It is with poets as with politicians, when either have once made up their minds to succeed by appealing to the mob as the mob —by appealing to their actual vulgarity and debasement, not to their latent and possible nobleness, every relic of generosity, every spark of the diviner flame that abides with them, is an absolute impediment to their popularity. But beneath the lowest depth to which genius can degrade itself, there is

yet a lower deep, the fee-simple and unalienable property whereof is vested in sincere native dullness. Let the *gentlemen* of the Fancy sound the base-string of humility as strongly as they will, they are but *Imitatorum servum pecus.* They want the true racy vulgarity of the butchers and draymen, their brawny protegés. Our dramatists may make the application for themselves.

Be the cause however what it may, few of our modern tragedies have met with distinguished success; still fewer have survived their first run, and of those the principal have been indebted to the extraordinary powers of an actor, who many times does not merely represent the conception of his author, but rather creates, out of his own voice, look, and gesture, a new and superior character. But, though an actor can supply passion, humour, form, and dignity, he cannot supply thought, without which no composition can last long. Thus, the recent ludicrous stage-pieces, (few, if any, of late years, have assumed the title of comedy,) though they have stood better than the more serious performances, (for we are sooner tired of wondering than of laughing,) have never strayed from the theatre to the fire-side; for the grimace, the tone, the costume, the incomparable oddities of visage, which carried them off so triumphantly, do not *explain*, but *constitute* their humour. And the tragedies which appear to have been written with a special reference to scenic representation, are too often constructed with such a cautious exclusion of thought, poetry, and common sense, both in the

plot and dialogue, as plainly to discover the low estimation in which the authors hold their expecting audience. A few flowers, a metaphor, a description, often pretty enough, but seldom appropriate, seem to be admitted on purpose to show what might have been produced, had the world been worthy of a higher strain. Fights, processions, storms, gun, drum, trumpet, blunderbuss, and thunder, raving mothers and their children, raw-head and bloody-bone villains, starts, swoonings, crim.-con., delirium, and blasphemy, are served up with all due deference to the low state of public taste, whereby good sense and judgment are as effectually banished from the theatre at present, as modesty and decorum in the time of Jeremy Collier.

Exceptions, honourable alike to the writers and to the town, might doubtless be cited; nor do we recollect a single instance of real dramatic merit failing of success, at least in the higher walks of the drama. It may sometimes have been withheld from the public by the fears and scruples of managers (who, we suspect, are by no means free from the apprehensions so common among authors, of cloying by superfluous excellence); but what dramatist can fairly complain, that in a weighty matter he has had harsh judgment, when his cause was fairly brought into court? We say in a weighty matter, for it is possible that a humorous absurdity may not always meet with an audience in a good humour, But against the condemnation of the best of these, it can only be alleged, that worse have had the luck to succeed.

But besides the authors, who by their own confession write badly in compliment to the general palate, there are others who write, and profess to write, without any regard to the public at all. A restless anticipation of neglect, a spontaneous defiance of censure, a carelessness of pleasing any but themselves, and such as themselves, indicate as strong a disposition to undervalue the sense of mankind as to over-value their own. They, as well as the self-abused worshippers of popularity, are haunted with the fear of their own too great excellence; the only difference is, that they pride themselves on despising this fear, while the others use it as a pretext for assuming credit both for the bad things which they do, and for the good ones which they do not write. The one, therefore, allow themselves to be out of sympathy with the world, and the others, that they are only in sympathy with its weakness and its follies, a state of mind on both parts somewhat unpromising, if, according to Aristotle, poetry is the most catholic, the most universal, and therefore the most philosophical and prominent of all concrete compositions. If it be more than science, more than even history, the common offspring of the heart and head in their highest state of improvement, emanating from the whole and common human nature, and addressed to the same, can that be poetry which confessedly has no other direction than to the temporary passions of the many, or to the peculiarities of a few? Yet such will ever be the productions of those who write for a multitude whom they despise,

or for a sect from whom they look for flattery, and neither the one nor the other will ever achieve the fame of classic poets, unless genius, the expositor of universal truth, oblige them to write better than they intend. The first duty of a poet, who aims at immortality, is to compose for men, as they are men, not as they chance to be philosophers by trade, or shopkeepers by trade; not as hypochondriacs or day-dreamers; not as possessed with certain fancies, humours, or diseases, arising out of individual temperaments, circumstances, and accidents, or which is almost as frequent, from caprice, wilfulness, and vanity, but as they are endued with common feelings, common faculties, a common sense of beauty and fitness, and a common susceptibility of certain impressions under certain conditions. But this duty will almost always be neglected by him who sets out with a despair or a contempt of general sympathy. He feels that his own mind is not in accord with that of his fellow-creatures; he therefore is afraid, not without cause, of being unintelligible, for sympathy is the ground of all mutual understanding. But, unwilling to condemn that in himself which seems to be more exclusively his own, he attributes his difference to superiority. He would have the tone of his peculiar feelings to serve as the key-note of the world, and failing of this, he modestly concludes that the world is out of tune. A presumptuous selfishness of intellect is the inevitable consequence of this conviction; the man becomes his own ideal excellence; he seeks for all things in

himself; and in himself too, not as a partaker of the discourse and communion of reason, but as he is A. B. or C, a gentleman possessed of such and such sensibilities and humours, quite as likely to proceed from bile as from inspiration.

But if this contempt of the common feelings of mankind be fatal to poetry in general, much more so is it to dramatic poetry, which demands an absolute exclusion of self, as the previous condition, for the forming of other and universally intelligible selves out of our common and communicable nature. For it is the paramount privilege and function of a real dramatist, to create characters possessing a self independent of his own; his personages are not fragments of the circumference of his own being, but have each a separate centre, a principle within them acting upon each other, subject to reaction from each other as much as actual living men. The ground of their actions and passions is in themselves; they act mutually upon each other, and are acted upon by the incidents of the plot, without any apparent design, or obtrusive interference of the author. In short, they are persons, and neither puppets nor abstractions! they vouch for their own truth and reality. Such were the characters of Homer, whom Aristotle pronounced to be the most dramatic of all poets, notwithstanding that he adopted the epic form. Such are the creations of Shakspeare, and such, as far they go, the fainter delineations of Massinger, and of other writers of the same period, whose dramatis personæ are persons scarce less than those of Shakspeare, but

then they are often persons of very little or of very disagreeable character.

On the other hand, Ben Jonson, the best of playwrights, and Fletcher, the first of dramatic poets after Shakspeare, both fail in this essential qualification of the dramatist. In the strength and vividness of their diction, in the clearness, fullness, and rapidity of their plots, in many smaller particulars, wherein their only likeness is excellence, they may jointly challenge the place immediately below their great master. But neither of them was divested of self; they were meddlesome writers, who departed in different ways from the truth of pure representation, fashioning their fancies rather by their own wayward wills, than by the immutable law of nature. Fletcher's characters have for the most part one temper—the hot blood of their author is in all their veins. They have passions and imaginations, but they have no personality. They are not born, not fairly separate from the matrix in which they were engendered. One of them might be called Fletcher's rage, another his pride, a third his wantonness, and the greater number his whims and jokes; but the best of them is not a separate and distinguishable being. They are not only caricatures, but caricatures of single features, and those features are all Fletcher's own. They possess indeed a life derived from the poet, but it is rather the life of wens and excrescences, than of a full-formed and healthy offspring.

Ben Jonson's characters are manufactured; they are a compilation of fashions and humours, put toge-

ther with great strength and adroitness, but without that "Promethean heat" which should fuse and animate these happy parts into a perfect living whole. Like many others, he seems to have been ignorant or forgetful that an accumulation of disjointed facts cannot make one consistent truth. It is probable that every trait, every folly, almost every phrase in his chief works, was faithfully copied from observation; yet the aggregate is a stiff, lifeless monster, not unlike the manufactured mermaid lately exhibited, of which nature supplied all the component parts, while the connexion of the whole was merely artificial. Even where the different humours are happily blended and shaded off, still there wants a ground of common nature. The *character* is made the whole man, which is never the case in Shakspeare, whose most grotesque imaginations are flesh and blood; of the same material that we all are made of, however strange their "form and pressure." Hence Jonson, with all the laborious exactness of his manners, and notwithstanding the skilful construction of his fable, produces no illusion: we see him everywhere at work with the wires.

His personages act and speak for no intelligible purpose, except to develop the plot and their own characters; and of these intentions they appear as fully conscious as old Ben himself. They are not humourists, but humours, or sometimes a complication of humours. Some physicians, infected with that unrequited passion for the muses, which has been observed to accompany or presage excellence in their

profession, instead of describing the symptoms of disease in the human body, have given us an allegorical description of disease, considered in the abstract. Jonson's representation of manners is much after the same fashion. In common with most writers and talkers who entertain an extraordinary opinion of their own understandings, he seems to have laboured under great apprehension from the supposed obtuseness of his auditors. Like the archer of Amphipolis, who despatched an arrow with a written direction "to Philip's right eye," he carefully labels the shafts of his own satire for their proper destination: and lest his actors should not sufficiently explain themselves, he occasionally deserts the dramatic form altogether, in order to expose them in his own person. And herein, as in most of his merits and defects, he is in sharp contrast with the gentle Willy, who, conscious that his heart was in sympathy with the common heart of mankind, seldom troubled himself to estimate the comparative degrees of intellect.

If the inventions of Fletcher partake of their author's temperament, those of Jonson are stamped with the impress of his mind—strong, rich, heavy, laborious, and assuming. Thoughts, words, gestures, and habits (for he has frequently particularised the gestures and dress of his characters) are alike splendid, elaborate, ostentatious, and ungraceful. He moves along the earth, through woods and morasses, with the stupendous and successful efforts of a giant refreshed with wine, and exulting in the power of his

own muscles. Shakspeare flashes from pole to pole, with the thought-executing speed of electricity, or imitates the involved and mazy rapidity of a fairy dance. Homer is an eagle, that glides along without let or impediment through the pure and passive sky.

We ought perhaps to apologise for this inordinate digression; but the truth is, that whenever we fall in with Shakspeare and his contemporaries, we have not resolution to part company with them, till at least three pages are fairly travelled over. Our limits oblige us to cut short the remainder of these preliminaries, with the simple observation, that the excellence of our early dramatists, the low but lucky ambition of some of our modern playwrights, and the contempt for public taste inculcated and professed, by some who have deserved fame, and *might* have obtained popularity, have conjointly operated to deter many young aspirants from soliciting the favour of an audience; and produce a pretty large number of *dramatic poems*, intended exclusively for the closet. This pre-determination has had its effects, in a diffuse luxuriance of style, an overgrowth of the undramatic portions (the ἀργὰ μέρη of the Stagyrite), a languor of action, and in some cases a scantiness of incident, which would never have befallen a writer, who with genius equal to the production of such works, had kept in mind the peculiar powers, privileges, and proprieties of the scene. Too much of self, too much of the poet, if not too much of the man, will unconsciously intrude, and the characters will often forget that they are speaking of present

things to each other, and talk as of things absent, and merely imagined, in the style of an uninterested describer. A dramatic writer should infuse into his persons a personal and reciprocal, not merely a poetical interest in all that they see, do, and suffer.

ON THE SUPERSTITION OF THE MIDDLE AGES.

(From a Review of Southey's "Pilgrims of Compostella," in Blackwood's Magazine.)

Mr. Southey here presents us with a brace of metrical legends, drawn from that inexhaustible and hitherto unrifled storehouse, the Roman Catholic, or as it may less offensively, and perhaps more justly be called, the Pseudo-Christian Mythology. No English Protestant, perhaps no living Romanist, is so well acquainted with the religious fables which, from the first century to the intellectual age of Joanna Southcote and Prince Hohenloe, have encrusted the Christian Church, as the prolific author of this little volume.

Few men, with understanding and morals so thoroughly Protestant, have imagination and feelings to comprehend so fully the beautiful in Romanism, while his keen sense of the ludicrous, only subdued by a deeper sense of religious awe, makes him as quickly alive to its absurdities. Thus qualified, he might, in the wealthy autumn of his powers, fulfil the purpose of his forward spring, by enriching the English language with a poem founded on the imaginative and human parts of the Catholic creed—adorned

with all its ceremonial pomp—its sensuous pathos—its strange self-denials — its soul-enthralling self-indulgences — and exalted by the multitudinous agencies of saints and angels—departed spirits and demons. Thalaba and Kehama have shown what he could effect with the gorgeous superstitions of Arabia and Hindostan; but these have no substance in English imaginations, no significance for English hearts. Mr. Southey has done for them all that could be done. He has presented them to the inward eye, distinctly, yet with all the splendid effects of multitude. Bodied forth by his romantic fancy, they very much resemble such a dream as might visit the late slumbers of a child after the first sight of a Christmas pantomime, or Easter melo-drama. He has done more—he has breathed a soul into shadows, gay and restless as gold and purple sunbeams on the western ocean. But the soul is not their own—it is not Arabesque, nor Hindoo, nor Oriental, but Christian English. No power of genius can reconcile, though it may disguise, the incongruity of a sensual religion with an almost ascetic morality. Even the human manners and actions which enter into the texture of the story are at variance with the sentiments and characters. Neither Oneiza nor Kailyal could have existed in a land of Harems. We do not allude to these discrepancies as faults—though critical faults may be more than excused, when they denote a pertinacity of moral virtue. Mr. Southey's imagination, which exercises a magical control over the elements of the visible universe, in nowise transforms

or modifies his moral sense, which remains among monsters and necromantic illusions, unchanged, undaunted, as Ulysses in the bower of Circe. But in reality, these inconsistencies are involved in the subjects to which his peculiar genius, and the course of his studies, directed his choice. Milton encountered tenfold greater absurdities and contradictions in his Paradise Lost—yet who can wish that he had chosen another theme? Who would part with Thalaba and Kehama—because, in order to address the sympathies of Europeans, it was necessary to semi-Christianise Orientalism? Though we are sometimes deceived in the expectation of a *coup-de-théâtre*, when the destroyer Thalaba, and the gentle Glendoveer, shall throw off their infidel garments, and turn out, the one a concealed agent of the Vice Society, (is it still in existence?) and the other a missionary in disguise; yet, on the whole, we are rather pleased to find our old friends Justice, Prudence, Temperance, and Fortitude, Faith, Hope, and Charity, Cleanliness, and Godliness, in all climates, and under all modes of belief. But a Catholic subject would have presented none of these difficulties. For whatever may be the sins of the Catholic church, they are not sins of *omission*—there is no true feeling of a Christian heart to which she does not afford an exponent. The blessed Mary—the divine womanhood—the virgin glorification of maternity, is surely the most beautiful, the loveliest, purest idea to which the erring spirit of man ever paid unbidden homage; and even among the inferior host of saints—tender maidens

and young children, who suffered all torments and strange fire for their Saviour's love—nuns that melted away in visionary ecstasies, or struggled in solitude with unutterable pangs — bestowing the warmest affections of a passionate female nature on spiritual beings, and pining with the heart sickness of deferred hope for the day when death should consummate their mystic espousals—pilgrims who passed from land to land, and roamed the earth while it was full of wonders—visited cities now wrapt in desert sands as with a winding sheet, and empires sunk beneath the shifting ocean—passing like silent shadows through regions of an unknown tongue, or proclaiming the truth with most miraculous organ to savage tribes and barbaric monarchs—hermits, whose solitude was frequented by guardian angels, and assaulting fiends, —whose "life remote from public haunt," was one fierce combat with demoniac horrors, or imaginary voluptuousness—infants that were consecrated in the womb—and penitents that rose from the grave of everlasting destruction—among all that multitude of hallowed names, which, thicker than stars, throng the wide heaven of popish fantasy—what spot of ground may not find a glorified patron—what grief but may claim a sympathising comforter—what work of war or peace but may ask a blessing—what can a poet dream, which can want a subliming and sanctifying precedent? And for that peculiar faculty which Mr. Southey possesses, of commending characteristic images and sounds to the inward eye—what wider or fairer field than the various and picturesque habits

of monks, friars, and nuns, the pageantry of processions, the marvels of religious architecture, as displayed in Cathedrals, rich with "ancient imagerie;" that from the pealing towers look down on populous cities—in convents, crowning the vine-clad hills of Spain and Italy, or offering shelter and food, and good men's prayers to such as plod the bare passes of the Alps—in abbeys, that reared their vast magnificence in seclusion—and in jewelled shrines, where bended knees and devout kisses wore away the marbles, the oratories, crosses, holy wells, and hermitages, even the rosary, "so beautiful, whether hanging from the neck of youth, or busily moving in the hand of the aged?"—The vesper bells, which unite a whole nation in one act of adoration—the solemn masses, which impute to the dead a continuous interest in the piety of the living—the midnight chants—the never-dying psalmody of devoted brethren, who, in ordered succession, receive and transmit the flame of ceaseless worship—the matins, and even-songs, heard duly in sad, and still, and sacred solitude—the deep, calm, traditional tone, and time-hallowed language of the ritual service—sounds which solemnise the air, speaking of what we are, and what we shall be, partake, even more than the song of birds, or melody of woods and waters, of the sublimed, chastened, and idealised humanity, which Poetry delights to find or beget in the objects of sense; while, in the mystic enthusiasm, and scholastic casuistry, which have grown up under the ample covert of the Roman church, employment is furnished to the

subtlest intellect, and a cup of enchantment is proffered to the thirsty soul. For the Catholic faith, truly Catholic in its comprehensiveness, however presumptuously, in regard of truth and unity, it may have usurped the title, is all things to all men—it accommodates all tastes and humours—its dogmatical tenets, established as they are by bulls and councils, and sanctioned by the terrors of temporal and eternal fire, however strict and tight they confine the simple conscience, to the initiate, are but like conjuror's knots, which seem too fast to be unloosed, yet are easily slipped, without breach or harm done, by those who know how, and no one the wiser, so that the sceptical Logician, the illuminated Pantheist, may sit down with the dull, wonder-loving, miracle-bolting, matter-of-fact, literal Believer, as easily as the Stoic, the Epicurean, and the Platonist, kept peace with the plain idolator within the pale of ancient Polytheism.

In truth, the Roman Catholic system is not the work of man, but of time and destiny—formed by the confluence and compromise of divers sects and factions —a joint-stock bank of errors, trading in the name and upon the credit of pure Christianity—to which corrupted Judaism contributed much, Paganism more, and each particular variety of heresy its quota. The policy of the Roman pontiffs, that master-piece of Satanic subtlety, confined all these lying spirits within its magic circle, and rendered them all its serviceable slaves. It were difficult to devise a shape of fallacy, a phantom of superstition, that hath not an equivalent, or any separable truth of the heart or

of the understanding, which may not find an efficient symbol in the Papal Pantheon. How wide a range of thought, allusion, and illustration—how varied and powerful a machinery may such a creed supply to a poet capable of due selection and arrangement,—a poet of a learned imagination, and a healthy taste, who could embody and illuminate the fairest conceptions, and soften or conceal the foul and odious lineaments of superstition!

The immense mass of legendary narrative which the Catholic church has produced and sanctioned, must needs contain a vast variety of incident, both probable and marvellous; and though many, perhaps most of the later inventions, bear evident marks of quackery and interested fraud, being in fact neither more nor less than puffing advertisements of particular shrines and relics, or more criminal impositions in support of a creed outworn, strongly marked by the unimaginative sameness and vulgarity which almost always adhere to venal falsehood; for justly, "dull and venal" are coupled in the Dunciad; there are also many stories conceived in a better spirit, some devised with good and honest intentions; others, doubtless, believed by the relators, records of illusion, which lift up the veil of our nature, and histories of true and lovely piety, furnishing most delightful evidence, that Heaven will never suffer those to remain in darkness, who love and desire the light, whatever impediments men or devils may oppose to its beams. The ray that streams through the quaint imagery of a painted window, displaying

the gaudy hues and distorted figures of saints, angels, and dragons, though discoloured as it passes, and doomed to struggle with the unnatural glimmer of noon-tide lamps, and pure hallowed tapers, is the same celestial body that glads the vernal morning.

Utterly rejecting, as we do, the critical dogma, that poetry of the highest class absolutely requires supernatural agency to produce its full effect, we would fain see what Mr. Southey could perform on a large scale, with the miraculous powers of Catholic credulity. It seems that no other machinery is left for a modern poet, capable of sustaining a deep, moral, rational, or universal interest. The serious simplicity of Protestantism forbids any poetical use of natures which our scriptural faith pronounces divine. Even in Milton, many pious persons are wounded by the intermixture of human inventions with the words of revelation. Allegorical personifications can only be tolerable in an express allegory, or apologue; and allegory (with due reverence to the shades of Spenser, and of John Bunyan) is a thing not much to our taste. The Greek and Latin Deities, what with bad school-boy Latin, and worse Cockney English, have become downright bores. Indeed, they never meant much, apart from local and patriotic associations. While Minerva guarded the Acropolis, and Jupiter kept state in the Capitol, they were awful beings; but to one who was neither Greek nor Roman, they could never have been more than magnificent forms, ideal glorifications of bodily strength or beauty; and whatever poetic worship they may still retain, is owing

far more to the painters and sculptors, than to the poets. The Gothic mythology has been partially tried, with but very partial success. It is too obscure, too monstrous, too full of horrors, and far too unwieldy and unimaginable, to enter into any composition where the gorgeous dimness and rapid coruscations of lyric madness could not be unremittingly maintained. Of the Mahometan and the Braminical systems, we have already spoken. They may be turned to good account in pure romance, where little more is required than to delight the eye of Fancy with brilliant costume and luxuriant scenery; but they cannot be connected with English feelings, and are so little familiar to ordinary readers, that an undue space must be occupied in explanatory detail (which is anything but poetry) to render it intelligible. It is true, the allusions may be explained in the notes, or the prolegomena, but that is an inartificial expedient, and makes the volume bulky and expensive. We are afraid, too, that we united brethren and sisteren of the three kingdoms find a great difficulty in transferring our sympathies and affections to the regions of Islamism and Boodhism. The affairs of India are closely intertwined, not only with our political, but in many instances with our personal and family interests, and yet it is wonderful how little the public think or know about them. The manners, the feelings, the religion of Eastern nations, present themselves to the imagination rather as splendid fictions than as sober realities. Distance of place has the same effect on the mind as distance

of time. Our belief in the Chinesian Pekin is as shadowy as our belief in the Egyptian Thebes; and it would be mere self-delusion to say, that we have any very satisfactory assurance of the existence of either. But the Roman Catholic faith, and all its attendant ministrations, lie at our own door; it grew out of the true religion into which we are baptised, and it has left evidence in our language, our customs, our sacred temples, and hoary ruins, of its substantive reality. That Mr. Southey had once a definite purpose of composing a poem, on the plan we have been recommending, he himself declares in the introductory letter or chapter of his Vindiciæ Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ, where he also explains the honourable and reverential scruples which prevented the execution of the design. He perceived also, in the quaint legends and extravagant dogmata of Hagiology, ample materials for the production of humorous effects and combinations, which he had thought of representing in some "wild and wondrous song," wherein his graphic fancy might have rivalled the Diableries of Caillot's pencil; but his profound respect for the very errors and excrescences of religion made him relinquish the intention. Yet, not to leave the world without a sample of what he could have done, he here presents us with two legends, a serious and a comic—a tragedy and a farce—the one wild, solemn, and pathetic, the other a story of a cock and a hen.

END OF VOL. I.

BRADBURY AND EVANS, PRINTERS, WHITEFRIARS.

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Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 02 April, 2016